

THE  
KING'S ENGLISH

ABRIDGED FOR SCHOOL USE

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HENRY FROWDE, M.A.

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## PREFACE

FOR the purposes of those to whom either the cost or the length of the book in its original form might be an obstacle, *The King's English* (Clarendon Press: 1st ed. 1906, 2nd ed. 1906, 3rd impression 1908) is here reduced by rather more than half. The saving has been effected chiefly by excluding as far as possible the controversial element, by simplifying the treatment of *shall* and *will*, *that* and *which*, the false gerund, and other matters discussed at length in the larger book, and by reducing the number of quotations.

AUGUST, 1908.



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Newspapers, &c., are quoted by initials as follows :—

<i>B. D. P.</i> Birmingham Daily Post.	<i>N.</i> Nation.
<i>D. E.</i> Daily Express.	<i>N. R.</i> National Review.
<i>D. M.</i> Daily Mail.	<i>O.</i> Outlook.
<i>D. T.</i> Daily Telegraph.	<i>S.</i> Spectator.
<i>G. A.</i> Guernsey Advertiser.	<i>S. R.</i> Saturday Review.
<i>G. E. P.</i> Guernsey Evening Press.	<i>T.</i> Times.
<i>I. L. N.</i> Illustrated London News.	<i>W. G.</i> Westminster Gazette.
<i>J. E.</i> Journal of Education.	

# CHAPTER I

## VOCABULARY

### GENERAL

ANY one who wishes to become a good writer should endeavour, before he allows himself to be tempted by the more showy qualities, to be direct, simple, brief, vigorous, and lucid.

This general principle may be translated into practical rules in the domain of vocabulary as follows :—

Prefer the familiar word to the far-fetched.

Prefer the concrete word to the abstract.

Prefer the single word to the circumlocution.

Prefer the short word to the long.

Prefer the Saxon word to the Romance.<sup>1</sup>

These rules are given roughly in order of merit ; the last is also the least. It is true that it is often given alone, as a sort of compendium of all the others. In some sense it is that : the writer whose percentage of Saxon words is high will generally be found to have fewer words that are out of the way, long, or abstract, and fewer periphrases, than another ; and conversely. But any one who therefore determines to restrict himself to Saxon, and expects it to act as a sort of charm, will be mistaking effect for cause, and offend instead of attracting all sensible readers ; observing that *translate* is derived from Latin, and learning that the Elizabethans had another word for it, he will pull us up by *englishing* his quotations ; he will puzzle the general reader by introducing his book with a *fore-*

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<sup>1</sup> The Romance languages are those whose grammatical structure, as well as part at least of their vocabulary, is directly descended from Latin—as Italian, French, Spanish.

*word*. Such freaks should be left to the Germans, who have, by this time succeeded in expelling as aliens a great many words that were good enough for Goethe. And they, indeed, are very likely right, because their language is a thoroughbred one; ours is not, and can now never be, anything but a hybrid; *foreword* may perhaps be Saxon; we can find out in the dictionary whether it is or not; but *preface* is English, dictionary or no dictionary; and we want to write English, not Saxon. Add to this that, even if the Saxon criterion were a safe one, more knowledge than most of us have is needed to apply it. Few who were not deep in philology would be prepared to state that no word in the following list (extracted from the preface to the *Oxford Dictionary*) is English:—*battle, beast, beauty, beef, bill, blue, bonnet, border, boss, bound, bowl, brace, brave, bribe, bruise, brush, butt, button*. These, as is there remarked, 'are now no less "native", and no less important constituents of our vocabulary, than the Teutonic words'.

There are, moreover, innumerable pairs of synonyms about which the Saxon principle gives us no help. The first to hand are *ere* and *before* (both Saxon), *save* and *except* (both Romance), *anent* and *about* (both Saxon again). Here, if the 'Saxon' rule has nothing to say, the 'familiar' rule leaves no doubt. The intelligent reader whom our writer has to consider will possibly not know the linguistic facts; indeed he more likely than not takes *save* for a Saxon word. But he does know the reflections that the words, if he happens to be reading leisurely enough for reflection, excite in him. As he comes to *save*, he wonders, Why not *except*? At sight of *ere* he is irresistibly reminded of that sad spectacle, a mechanic wearing his Sunday clothes on a weekday. And *anent*, to continue the simile, is nothing less than a masquerade costume. The *Oxford Dictionary* says drily of the last word: 'Common in Scotch law phraseology, and affected by many English writers'; it might have gone further, and said

“affected” in any English writer; such things are antiquarian rubbish, Wardour-Street English. Why not (as our imagined intelligent reader asked)—why not *before*, *except*, and *about*? Bread is the staff of life, and words like these, which are common and are not vulgar, which are good enough for the highest and not too good for the lowest, are the staple of literature. The first thing a writer must learn is, that he is not to reject them unless he can show good cause. *Before* and *except*, it must be clearly understood, have such a prescriptive right that to use other words instead is not merely not to choose these, it is to reject them. It may be done in poetry, and in the sort of prose that is half poetry: to do it elsewhere is to insult *before*, to injure *ere* (which is a delicate flower that will lose its quality if much handled), and to make one’s sentence both pretentious and frigid.

It is now perhaps clear that the Saxon oracle is not infallible; it will sometimes be dumb, and sometimes lie. Nevertheless, it is not without its uses as a test. The words to be chosen are those that the probable reader is sure to understand without waste of time and thought; a good proportion of them will in fact be Saxon, but mainly because it happens that most abstract words—which are by our second rule to be avoided—are Romance. The truth is that all five rules would be often found to give the same answer about the same word or set of words. Scores of illustrations might be produced; let one suffice: *In the contemplated eventuality* (a phrase no worse than what any one can pick for himself out of his paper’s leading article for the day) is at once the far-fetched, the abstract, the periphrastic, the long, and the Romance, for *if so*. It does not very greatly matter by which of the five roads the natural is reached instead of the monstrosity, so long as it *is* reached. The five are indicated because (1) they differ in directness, and (2) in any given case only one of them may be possible.

We will now proceed to a few examples of how not to write.

roughly classified under the five headings, though, after what has been said, it will cause no surprise that most of them might be placed differently. Some sort of correction is suggested for each, but the reader will indulgently remember that to correct a bad sentence satisfactorily is not always possible; it should never have existed, that is all that can be said. In particular, sentences overloaded with abstract words are, in the nature of things, not curable simply by substituting equivalent concrete words; there can be no such equivalents; the structure has to be more or less changed.

1. Prefer the familiar word to the far-fetched.

The old Imperial naval policy, which has failed conspicuously because it *antagonized the unalterable supremacy of Colonial nationalism*.—T.  
(stood in the way of that national ambition which must always be uppermost in the Colonial mind)

The state of Poland, and the excesses committed by mobilized troops, have been of a far more serious nature than has been allowed to *transpire*.—T. (come out)

Reform converses with possibilities, *perchance* with impossibilities; but here is sacred fact.—EMERSON. (perhaps)

Witchcraft has been put a stop to by Act of Parliament; but the mysterious relations which it *emblemized* still continue.—CARLYLE.  
(symbolized)

*Continual vigilance is imperative on the public to ensure . . .*—T.  
(We must be ever on the watch)

These manœuvres are by no means new, and *their reïrudescence is hardly calculated to influence the development of events*.—T.  
(the present use of them is not likely to be effective)

'I have no particular business at L——', said he; 'I was merely going *thither* to pass a day or two.'—BORROW. (there)

2. Prefer the concrete word (or rather expression) to the abstract. It may be here remarked that abstract expression and the excessive use of nouns are almost the same thing. The cure consists very much, therefore, in the clearing away of noun rubbish.

*An elementary condition of a sound discussion is a frank recognition of the gulf severing two sets of facts*.—T.

(There can be no sound discussion where the gulf severing two sets of facts is not frankly recognized)

\* *The signs of the times point to the necessity of the modification of the system of administration.—T.*

(It is becoming clear that the administrative system must be modified)

*No year passes now without evidence of the truth of the statement that the work of government is becoming increasingly difficult.—S.*

(Every year shows again how true it is that . . .)

*The first private conference relating to the question of the convocation of representatives of the nation took place yesterday.—T.*

(on national representation)

*There seems to have been an absence of attempt at conciliation between rival sects.—D. T.*

\* (The sects seem never even to have tried mutual conciliation)

• 3. Prefer the single word to the circumlocution. As the word *case* seems to lend itself particularly to abuse, we start with more than one specimen of it.

*Inaccuracies were in many cases due to cramped methods of writing.—Cambridge University Reporter. (often)*

*The handwriting was on the whole good, with a few examples of remarkably fine penmanship in the case both of boys and girls.—Ibid.*

(by both boys . . .)

*Few candidates showed a thorough knowledge of the text of 1 Kings, and in many cases the answers lacked care.—Ibid. (many answers)*

*M. Witte is taking active measures for the prompt preparation of material for the study of the question of the execution of the Imperial Ukase dealing with reforms.—T.*

(actively collecting all information that may be needed before the Tsar's reform Ukase can be executed)

*Mr. J—— O—— has been made the recipient of a silver medal.—G. A. (received)*

#### 4. Prefer the short word to the long.

*One of the most important reforms mentioned in the rescript is the unification of the organization of the judicial institutions and the guarantee for all the tribunals of the independence necessary for securing to all classes of the community equality before the law.—T.*

(is that of the Courts, which need a uniform system, and the independence without which it is impossible for all men to be equal before the law)

*I merely desired to point out the principal reason which I believe exists for the great exaggeration which is occasionally to be observed in the estimate of the importance of the contradiction between current*



*Religion and current Science put forward by thinkers of reputation.*—BALFOUR.

(why, in my opinion, some well-known thinkers make out the contradiction between current Religion and current Science to be so much more important than it is)

Sir,—Will you permit me to *homologate* all you say to-day regarding that selfish minority of motorists who . . . —T. (agree with)

On the Berlin Bourse to-day the prospect of a general strike was cheerfully *envisaged*.—T. (faced)

### 5. Prefer the Saxon word to the Romance.

*Despite the unfavourable climatic conditions.*—G. A. (Bad as the weather has been)

By way of general rules for the choice of words, so much must suffice. And these must be qualified by the remark that what is suitable for one sort of composition may be unsuitable for another. The broadest line of this kind is that between poetry and prose; but with that we are not concerned, poetry being quite out of our subject. There are other lines, however, between the scientific and the literary styles, the dignified and the familiar. Our rendering of the passage quoted from Mr. Balfour, for instance, may be considered to fall below the dignity required of a philosophic essay. The same might, with less reason, be said of our simplified newspaper extracts; a great journal has a tone that must be kept up; if it had not been for that, we should have dealt with them yet more drastically. But a more candid plea for the journalist, and one not without weight, would be that he has not time to reduce what he wishes to say into a simple and concrete form. It is in fact as much easier for him to produce, as it is harder for his reader to understand, the slipshod abstract stuff that he does rest content with. But it may be suspected that he often thinks the length of his words and his capacity for dealing in the abstract to be signs of a superior mind. As long as that opinion prevails, improvement is out of the question. But if it could once be established that simplicity was the true

ideal, many more writers would be found capable of coming near it than ever make any effort that way now. The fact remains, at any rate, that different kinds of composition require different treatment; but an attempt to go into details on the question would be too ambitious; the reader can only be warned that in this fact may be found good reasons for sometimes disregarding any or all of the preceding rules. Moreover, they must not be applied either so unintelligently as to sacrifice any really important shade of meaning, or so invariably as to leave an impression of monotonous and unrelieved emphasis.

The rest of this chapter will be devoted to more special points.

### MALAPROPS

A malaprop is a word used in the belief that it has the meaning of another word that it resembles in some particular.

1. Words containing the same stem, but necessarily, or at least indisputably, distinguished by termination or prefix.

The step seems a trifle rash and *precipitous* when one remembers the number of banking and commercial failures that . . . —*N.* (precipitate)

By all means let us have bright, hearty, and very *reverend* services.—

*D. T.* (reverent)

He chuckled at his own *perspicuity*.—*CORELLI.*

If the writer had a little more *perspicuity* he would have known that the Church Congress would do nothing of the kind.—*D. T.*

*Perspicuity* is clearness or transparency: insight is *perspicacity*. -*uity* of style, -*acity* of mind. Very common.

In the meantime the colossal advertisement in the German Press of German aims, of German interests, and of German policy *incontinently* proceeds.—*T.*

The idiomatic sense of *incontinently* is *immediately*; it seems here to be used for *continually*.

I was *awaiting* with real curiosity to hear the way in which M. Loubet would to-day acquit himself.—*T.* (waiting)

*Await* is always transitive.

But they too will feel the pain just where you feel it now, and they will *bethink* themselves the only unhappy on the earth.—CROCKETT.

There is no sort of authority for *bethink*—like *think*—with object and complement. *To bethink oneself* is to remember, or to hit upon an idea.

And Pizarro . . . established the city of Arequipa, since *arisen* to such commercial celebrity.—PRESCOTT.

Arethusa arose; a difficulty arises; but to greatness we can only rise—unless, indeed, we wake to find ourselves famous; then we do arise to greatness.

*Practical* and *practicable*, *definite* and *definitive*, may be mentioned as needing care.

2. Words like the previous set, except that the differentiation may possibly be disputed.

The long drought left the torrent of which I am speaking, and such others, in a state peculiarly favourable to *observance* of their least action on the mountains from which they descend.—RUSKIN. (*observation*)

*Observance* is obedience, compliance, &c.

It is physical science, and experience, that man ought to consult in religion, morals, *legislature*, as well as in knowledge and the arts.—MORLEY. (*legislation*)

*Legislature* is the legislative body—in England, King, Lords, and Commons.

The apposite display of the diamonds usually stopped the tears that began to flow hereabouts; and she would remain in a *complaisant* state until . . . —DICKENS. (*complacent*)

Our Correspondent adds that he is fully persuaded that Rozhdestvensky has nothing more to expect from the *complacency* of the French authorities.—T. (*complaisance*)

*Complaisant* is over polite, flattering, subservient, &c. *Complacent* means contented, satisfied.

The Rev. Dr. Usher said he believed the writer of the first letter to be earnest in his inquiry, and agreed with him that the topic of it was *transcendentally* important.—D. T.

*Transcendentally* means in a superlative degree: *transcendentally* is a philosophic term for independently of experience, &c.

At such times . . . Jimmie's better angel was always in the ascendency.—*Windsor Magazine*.

Was in the *ascendant*: had an *ascendency* over.

The *requisition* for a life of Christianity is 'walk in love'.—*D. T.*

*Requisite* or *requirement*, the thing required: *requisition*, the act of requiring it.

I was able to watch the Emperor during all these interviews, and noticed the forcible manner in which he spoke, especially to the Sultan's uncle, who came from Fez *especially*.—*T.* (specially).

As it stands, it implies that he came chiefly from Fez, but from other places in a minor degree; it is meant to imply that he came for this particular interview, and had no other motive. The differentiation of *spec-* and *espec-* is by no means complete yet, but some uses of each are already ludicrous. Roughly, *spec-* means particular as opposed to general, *espec-* particular as opposed to ordinary; but usage must be closely watched.

That it occurs in *violence* to police regulations is daily apparent.—*G. A.* (violation of)

I hold that the wording of that address was *unexceptional*, and could very properly be signed by any friend of Russia.—*J. ST. L. STRACHEY.* (unexceptionable)

3. **Give-and-take forms**, in which there are two words, with different constructions, that might properly be used, and one is given the construction of the other.

A few companies, *comprised* mainly of militiamen.—*T.*  
(composed of? comprising?)

The *Novoe Vremya* thinks the Tsar's words will undoubtedly *instil* the Christians of Macedonia *with* hope.—*T.*  
(inspire them with hope? instil hope into them?)

He appreciated the leisurely solidity, the leisurely beauty of the place, so *innate* *with* the genius of the Anglo-Saxon.—*E. F. BENSON.*  
(genius innate in the place? the place instinct with genius?)

4. **Words having properly no connexion** with each other at all, but confused owing to superficial resemblance.

Mr. Barton walked forth in cape and boa, to read prayers at the work-house, *euphuistically* called the 'College'.—ELIOT. (euphemistically)

*Euphemism* is slurring over badness by giving it a good name: *euphuism* is a literary style full of antithesis and simile.

In the present *self-deprecatory* mood in which the English people find themselves.—S. (self-depreciatory)

*Depreciate*, undervalue: *deprecate*, pray against. A bad but very common blunder.

When . . . first produced, its popularity was limited. Nevertheless it may now sail into a more *fortuitous* harbour on the strength of its author's later reputation.—W. G. (fortunate)

What she would say to him, how he would take it, even the vaguest *predication* of their discourse, was beyond him to guess.—E. F. BENSON. (prediction)

*Predication* has nothing to do with the future; it is a synonym, used especially in logic, for *statement*.

5. Words whose meaning is misapprehended without apparent cause. The hankering of ignorant writers after the unfamiliar or imposing leads to much of this.

To *eke out* means to increase, supplement, or add to. It may be called a synonym for any of these verbs; but it must be remembered that no synonyms are ever precise equivalents. The peculiarity of *eke out* is that it implies difficulty; but apart from that it means supplement, not make, nor endure. From its nature, it will very seldom be used (correctly), though it conceivably might, without the source of the addition's being specified. In the first of the quotations, it is rightly used; in the second it is given the wrong meaning of *make*, and in the last the equally wrong one of *endure*.

A writer with a story to tell that is not very fresh usually *ekes it out* by referring as much as possible to surrounding objects.—H. JAMES.

She had contrived, taking one year with another, to *eke out* a tolerably sufficient living since her husband's demise.—DICKENS.

Yes, we do believe, or would the clergy *eke out* an existence which is not far removed from poverty?—D. T.

'There are many things in the commonwealth of Nowhere, which I rather wish than hope to see adopted in our own.' It was with these words of characteristic *irony* that More closed the great work.—J. R. GREEN.

The word *irony* is one of the worst abused in the language; but it was surely never more gratuitously imported than in this passage. There could be no more simple, direct, and literal expression of More's actual feeling than his words. Now any definition of irony must include this, that the surface meaning and the underlying meaning of what is said are not the same. The only way to make out that we have irony here is to suppose that More assumed that the vulgar would think that he was speaking ironically, whereas he was really serious—a very topsy-turvy explanation. *Satire*, however, with which *irony* is often confused, would have passed.\*

A literary tour de force, a *recrudescence*, two or three generations later, of the very respectable William Lamb (afterwards Lord Melbourne), his unhappy wife, Lady Caroline Lamb, and Lord Byron.—*T.* (reincarnation, avatar, resurrection?)

*Recrudescence* is becoming quite a fashionable journalistic word. It properly means the renewed inflammation of a wound, and so the breaking out again of an epidemic, &c. It may reasonably be used of revolutionary or silly opinions: to use it of persons or their histories is absurd.

In a word, M. Witte was always against all our aggressive measures in the Far East. . . . M. Witte, who was always supported by Count Lamsdorff, has no share in the responsibility of all that has *transpired*.—*T.* (happened)

As a synonym for *become known*,<sup>1</sup> *transpire* is journalistic and ugly, but may pass: as a synonym for *happen*, it is a bad blunder, but not uncommon.

It was, of course, Mrs. Sedley's opinion that her son would *demean* himself by a marriage with an artist's daughter.—THACKERAY.

The actors who raddle their faces and *demean* themselves on the stage.—STEVENSON. (lower, degrade)

To *demean* oneself, with adverb of manner attached, is to

<sup>1</sup> As in the second quotation from *The Times* on p. 10.

behave in that manner. The other use has probably arisen by a natural confusion with the adjective *mean*; one suspects that it has crept into literature by being used in intentional parody of vulgar speech, till it was forgotten that it was parody.

'Oxonienſis' approaches them with courage, his thoughts are expressed in plain, unmistakable language, *howbeit* with the touch of a master hand.—*D. T.*

*Albeit* means *though*: *howbeit* always *nevertheless*, beginning not a subordinate clause, but a principal sentence. A good example of the danger attending ignorant archaism. •

In a word, Count von Bülow, who took a very rosy view of the agreement last year, now suddenly discovers that he was slighted, and is indignant in the *paulo-post future tense*.—*T.*

- This jest would be pedantic in any case, since no one but schoolmasters and schoolboys knows what the paulo-post-future tense is. Being the one represented in English by *I shall have been killed*, it has, further, no application here; *paulo-ante-past tense*, if there were such a thing, might have meant something. As it is, pedantry is combined with inaccuracy.

6. Words used in unaccustomed, though not impossible, senses or applications. This is due sometimes to that avoidance of the obvious which spoils much modern writing, and sometimes to an ignorance of English idiom excusable in a foreigner, but not in a native.

No one can imagine non-intervention carried through so desperate and so *consequential* a war as this.—GREENWOOD.

If *important* or *fateful* will not do, it is better to write *a war so desperate and so pregnant with consequences* than to abuse a word whose idiomatic uses are particularly well marked. A *consequential* person is one who likes to exhibit his consequence; a *consequential* amendment is one that is a natural consequence or corollary of another. .

Half of Mr. Roosevelt's speech deals with this double need of justice and strength, the other half being a *skilled* application of Washington's maxims to present circumstances.—*T.* (skilful)

Idiom confines *skilled*, except in poetry, almost entirely to the word *labour*, and to craftsmen—a skilled mason, for instance.

It is to the Convention, therefore, that reference must be made for an *intelligence* of the principles on which the Egyptian Government has acted during the present war.—*T.* (understanding)

No one can say why *intelligence* should never be followed by an objective genitive, as grammarians call this; but nearly every one knows, apart from the technical term, that it never is. Idiom is an autocrat, with whom it is always well to keep on good terms.

#### 7. Simple love of the long word.

The wide public importance of these proposals [customs regulations] has now been conceived in no *desultory* manner.—*G. A.*

The number of possible malaprops, however, is infinite; no catalogue of them can be given in a book; every one must construct his own catalogue by care, observation, and the resolve to use no word whose meaning he is not sure of—even though that resolve bring on him the extreme humiliation of now and then opening the dictionary. The aim here has been, not to make a list, but to inculcate a frame of mind.

### MALTREATED IDIOMS

The making of a malaprop usually results from the maker's having in his mind two words with which he is not familiar enough to distinguish between them—just as one may confuse two persons to whom one has just been introduced. A similar haziness often causes idiomatic phrases or constructions to be maltreated.

#### 1. Two existing idioms are fused into a non-existent one.

Mr. C. Busk . . . said that he could only *account for* the weather as being in the main responsible for the disaster.—*W. G.* (point to A as responsible for B: account for B as due to A)



The sun shone all day with the radiance that scorched.—*D. T.* (the r. that scorches : a r. that scorched)

It did not take him much trouble.—*D. SLADEN.* (I take : it costs me)

An opportunity should be afforded the enemy of retiring northwards, more or less of their own account.—*T.* (of my own accord : on my own account)

Dr. Kuyper admitted that his opinion had been consulted.—*T.* (I consult you : take your opinion)

It gives me the greatest pleasure in adding my testimony.—*D. T.* (I have p. in adding : it gives me p. to add)

I can speak from experience that ... 'conversion' ... was a very real and powerful thing.—*D. T.* (speak to c.'s being : say that c. was)

My position is one of a clerk, thirty-eight years of age, and married.—*D. T.* (one that no one would envy : that of a clerk)

## 2. Of two distinct idioms the wrong is chosen.

Once again it is our pleasure to notice the annual issue of 'The Home Messenger'.—*W. G.* (we have the p. of noticing. The form chosen is proper to royal personages expressing their gracious will)

It now devolves upon me to state more particularly on what materials the text ... is based. The *Poems* may first attract our attention.—*GOSSE.* (P. first attract : P. may first occupy. A thing does not wait for permission to attract)

In the face of it the rule appears a most advisable one.—*G. A.* (*on the face of it* means *prima facie* : the other means *in spite of*)

He may doubt that his policy will be any more popular in England a year or two hence than it is now.—*GREENWOOD.* (I doubt whether : do not doubt that)

## 3. The form of an idiom is distorted, without confusion with another.

Russia is now bitterly expiating her share in the infamy then visited upon Japan.—*T.* (We visit upon a person his sins, or something for which he is responsible, and not we ; or again, we may visit our indignation upon him)

But both Governments have now requested Washington to be chosen as the place of meeting.—*T.* (requested that W. should)

He had studied war for nine years before he put the pen to the paper.—*T.* (put pen to paper. This looks like imitation French ; it is certainly not English)

## 4. The meaning of an idiom is mistaken without confusion with another.

The joke [ex luce lucellum] had to be explained; its humour wholly vanishes when it is put into English... The country laughed at the joke and not with it.—MCCARTHY. (this distinction between *at* and *with* is applicable only to persons)

He would stay within his cottage, never darkening the door or seeing other face than his own inmates.—TROLLOPE. (*to d. the d.* is always to enter as visitor, never to go out)

## PET PHRASES

• The malaprop and the maltreated idiom are accounted for by a writer's venturing to make free with a word or phrase on too slight acquaintance. • There is also the opposite danger of being so familiar with a formula as to let it present itself whenever it pleases. Vivid writers must be careful not to repeat a conspicuous phrase so soon that a reader of ordinary memory has not had time to forget it before it invites his attention again. Whatever its merits, to use it twice (unless deliberately and with point) is much worse than never to have thought of it. The 'mandate' examples below are from Mr. McCarthy, the rest from J. R. Green.

With the reign of Edward [I] begins modern England, the England in which we live.

Modern England, the England among whose thoughts and sentiments we actually live, began with the triumph of Naseby.

... the entry of Charles the Second into Whitehall. With it modern England begins.

The temper of the first [King George] was that of a gentleman usher.

Bute was a mere court favourite, with the abilities of a gentleman usher.

'For weeks,' laughed Horace Walpole, 'it rained gold boxes.'

'We are forced to ask every morning what victory there is,' laughed Horace Walpole.

The position of the Whigs would in any case have been difficult. Their mandate, to use the French phrase, seemed to be exhausted.

They have done what they wanted to do; they have, according to the French phrase, exhausted their mandate.

It was plain that the mandate, to use a French phrase, of the Parliament was nearly out.

It would almost seem as if the present school of fiction is, to borrow a phrase from French politics, exhausting its mandate.

## AMERICANISMS

Though we take these separately from foreign words, which will follow next, the distinction is purely *pro forma*; Americanisms are foreign words, and should be so treated. To say this is not to insult the American language. If any one were asked to give an Americanism without a moment's delay, he would be more likely than not to mention *I guess*. Inquiry into it would at once bear out the American contention that what we are often rude enough to call their vulgarisms are in fact good old English. *I gesse* is a favourite expression of Chaucer's, and the sense he sometimes gives it is very finely distinguished from the regular Yankee use. But though it is good old English, it is not good new English. If we use the phrase—parenthetically, that is, like Chaucer and the Yankees—, we have it not from Chaucer, but from the Yankees, and with their, not his, exact shade of meaning. It must be recognized that they and we, in parting some hundreds of years ago, started on slightly divergent roads in language long before we did so in politics. In the details of divergence, they have sometimes had the better of us. *Fall* is better on the merits than *autumn*, in every way: it is short, Saxon (like the other three-season names), picturesque; it reveals its derivation to every one who uses it, not to the scholar only, like *autumn*; and we once had as good a right to it as the Americans; but we have chosen to let the right lapse, and to use the word now is no better than larceny.

The other side of this is that we are entitled to protest when any one assumes that because a word of less desirable character is current American, it is therefore to be current English. A very firm stand ought to be made against *placate*, *transpire*,<sup>1</sup> and *antagonize*, all of which have English patrons.

Fix up (organize), back of (behind), anyway (at any rate),

<sup>1</sup> Even in the legitimate sense (see p. 17), originally a happy metaphor for mysterious leaking out, but now vulgarized and 'dead'.

standpoint (point of view), back-number (antiquated), right along (continuously), some (to some extent), just (quite, or very — 'just lovely'), may be added as typical Americanisms of a different kind from either *fall* or *antagonize*; but it is now worth while to make a large collection; every one knows an Americanism, at present, when he sees it; how long that will be true is a more anxious question.

### FOREIGN WORDS

The usual protest must be made, to be treated no doubt with the usual disregard. The difficulty is that some French, Latin, and other words are now also English, though the fiction that they are not is still kept up by italics and (with French words) conscientious efforts at pronunciation. Such are *tête-à-tête*, *ennui*, *status quo*, *raison d'être*, *eirenicon*, *négligé*, and perhaps hundreds more. The novice who is told to avoid foreign words, and then observes that these English words are used freely, takes the rule for a counsel of perfection — not accepted by good writers, and certainly not to be accepted by him, who is sometimes hard put to it for the ornament that he feels his matter deserves. Even with the best will in the world, he finds that there are many words of which he cannot say whether they are yet English or not, as *gaucherie*, *bêtise*, *camaraderie*, *souçon*, so that there is no drawing the line. He can only be told that all words not English in appearance are in English writing ugly and not pretty, and that they are only justified (1) if they afford much the shortest or clearest, if not the only way to the meaning (this is usually true of the words we have called really English), or (2) if they have some special appropriateness of association or allusion in the sentence they stand in. This will be illustrated by some of the diplomatic words given below.

Some little assistance may, however, be given on details.

1. To say *distrain* instead of *absent* or *absent-minded*, *bien*.

*entendu* for *of course*, *sans* for *without* (it is, like *I guess*, good old English but not good English), *quand même* for *anyhow*, *penchant* for *liking* or *fancy*, *premier* for *first*, *coûte que coûte* for *at all costs*, *Schadenfreude* for *malicious pleasure*, *œuvre* for *work*, *alma mater* (except with strong extenuating circumstances) for *University*—is pretension and nothing else. The substitutes we have offered are not insisted upon; they may be wrong, or not the best; but English can be found for all these. Moreover, what was said of special association or allusion may apply; to call a luncheon *déjeuner*, however, as in the appended extract, because it is to be eaten by Frenchmen, is hardly covered by this, though it is a praiseworthy attempt at what the critics call giving an atmosphere.

It was resolved that on the occasion of the visit of the French Fleet in August the Corporation should offer the officers an appropriate reception and invite them to a *déjeuner* at the Guildhall.—*T.*

But speaking broadly, what a writer effects by using these ornaments is to make us imagine him telling us he is a wise fellow and one that hath everything handsome about him, including a gentlemanly acquaintance with the French language. Some illustrations follow:

There was a time when the School of Literae Humaniores stood first in point of number, but of late the History School has taken *premier* place.—*W. G.* (the italics are ours)

Motorists lose more than they know by *bêtises* of this kind.—*T.*

His determination to conduct them to a successful issue *coûte que coûte* might result in complications.—*T.*

The gloom which the Russian troubles have caused at Belgrade has to some extent been lightened by a certain *Schadenfreude* over the difficulties with which the Hungarian crisis threatens the neighbouring Monarchy.—*T.*

A recent reperusal ... left the impression which is so often produced by the exhibition in bulk of the *œuvre* of a deceased Royal Academician.—*T.*

The following are instances of less familiar French or Latin words used wantonly:

... the peculiar white glare of the sunlight reflected from the hawthorn

blossoms, which must have been far more *frappant* when South Britain was one vast forest.—*W. G.*

But times have changed, and this procedure enters into the category of *vieille escrime* when not employed by a master hand.—*T.*

In relation to military organization we are still in the flourishing region of the *vieilles perruques*.—*T.*

The users of these two varieties, who, to judge from the title at the head of their articles, are one and the same person, must have something newer than *vieux jeu*. Just as that has begun to be intelligible to the rest of us, it becomes itself *vieux jeu* to them. It is like the man of highest fashion changing his hat-brim because the man of middling fashion has found the pattern of it. So the next.

I shall look with greater interest to-morrow at the . . . little clerk who travels to the city every morning in the same corner of the same train. *Quien sabe?*—*D. T.*

This is Spanish, and means 'Who knows?' What it is doing here, *wer weiss?*

The familiar gentleman burglar, who, having played wolf to his fellows *qua* financier, journalist, and barrister, undertakes to raise burglary from being a trade at least to the lupine level of those professions.—*T.*

It is quite needless, and hardly correct, to use *qua* instead of *as* except where a sharp distinction is being made between two coexistent functions or points of view.

It was he who by doctoring the Ems dispatch in 1870 converted a *chamade* into a *fanfaronnade* and thus rendered the Franco-German war inevitable.—*T.*

We can all make a shrewd guess at the meaning of *fanfaronnade*: how many average readers have the remotest idea of what a *chamade* is? and is the function of newspapers to force upon us against our will the buying of French dictionaries?

2. Among the diplomatic words, *entente* may pass as suggesting something a little more definite and official than *good understanding*; *démenti* because, though it denotes the same as *denial* or *contradiction*, it connotes that no more

credence need be given to it than is usually given to the 'honest men sent to lie abroad for the good of their country'; as for *ballon d'essai*, we see no advantage in it over *kite*, and *flying a kite*, which are good English; it is, however, owing to foreign correspondents' perverted tastes, already more familiar. The words italicized in the following quotations are still more questionable:

The two Special Correspondents in Berlin of the leading morning newspapers, the *Matin* and the *Écho de Paris*, report a marked *détente* in the situation.—*T.*

*Entente* is comprehensible to every one; but with *détente* many of us are in the humiliating position of not knowing whether to be glad or sorry.

All the great newspapers have insisted upon the inopportune of the *démarche* of William II.—*T.* (proceeding)

The *entourage* and counsellors of the Sultan continue to remain sceptical.—*T.*

Mere laziness, even if the word means anything different from *counsellors*; but the writer has at least given us an indication that it is only verbiage, by revealing his style in *continue to remain*.

In diplomatic circles the whole affair is looked upon as an *acte de malveillance* towards the Anglo-French *entente*.—*T.*

You have been immensely amused, cyrenaically enjoying the moment for the moment's sake, but looking before and after (as you cannot help looking in the theatre) you have been disconcerted and *dérouté*.—*T.*

3. It sometimes occurs to a writer that he would like to avail himself of a foreign word or phrase, whether to make a genuine point or to show that he has the gift of tongues, and yet not keep his less favoured readers in the dark; he accordingly uses a literal translation instead of the actual words. It may fairly be doubted whether this is ever worth while; but there is all the difference in the world, as we shall presently exemplify in a pair of contrasted quotations, between the genuine and the ostentatious use. The most familiar phrase thus treated is *cela va sans dire*; we have of our

own *I need hardly say, needless to remark*, and many other varieties; and the French phrase has no wit or point in it to make it worth aping; we might just as well say, in similar German or French English (whichever of the two languages we had it from), *that understands itself*; each of them has to us the quaintness of being non-idiomatic, and no other merit whatever.

The verb *to orient* is a Gallicism of much the same sort.

\*. In his quality of eligible bachelor he had no objections at any time to conversing with a good-looking girl. Only he wished very much that he could *orient* this particular one.—CROCKETT.

The next extract is perhaps from the pen of a French-speaker trying to write English: but it is not worse than what the English writers who come below him do deliberately:

Our enveloping movement, which has been proceeding *since several days*.—T.

Making every allowance for special circumstances, the manner in which these amateur soldiers of seven weeks' service acquitted themselves compels one 'furiously to think'.—W. G.

Bath, it may be admitted, does not leap to the eyes as an obvious or inevitable meeting-place for the Congress.—W. G.

Appended are the passages illustrating the two different motives for translation:

If we could take this assurance at its face value and *to the foot of the letter*, we should have to conclude . . .—T.

It will be observed (a) that *literally* gives the meaning perfectly; (b) that *to the foot of the letter* is absolutely unintelligible to any one not previously acquainted with *au pied de la lettre*; (c) that there is no wit or other admirable quality in the French itself. The writer is meanly admiring mean things; nothing could possibly be more fatuous than such half-hearted gallicizing—unless, indeed, half-heartedness is carried so far that the phrase loses in translation even its quaintness; e. g.:

The tone of Russian official statements on the subject is not encouraging, but then, perhaps, they ought not to be taken *at the letter*.—T.



I thought afterwards, but it was *the spirit of the staircase*, what a pity it was that I did not stand at the door with a hat, saying, 'Give an obol to Belisarius'.—MORLEY.

The French have had the wit to pack into the words *esprit d'escalier* the common experience that one's happiest retorts occur to one only when the chance of uttering them is gone, the door is closed, and one's feet are on the staircase. That is well worth introducing to an English audience; the only question is whether it is of any use to translate it without explanation. No one will know what *spirit of the staircase* is who is not already familiar with *esprit d'escalier*; and even he who is may not recognize it in disguise, seeing that *esprit* does not mean spirit (which suggests a goblin lurking in the hall clock), but wit.

4. A special caution may be given against using foreign phrases in wrong senses.

*Scandalum magnatum* is a favourite with the lower-class novelist who takes *magnatum* for a participle meaning *magnified*, and finds the combination less homely than *a shocking affair*. It is a genitive plural noun, and the amplified translation of the two words, which we borrow from the *Encyclopædia*, runs: 'Slander of great men, such as peers, judges, or great officers of state, whereby discord may arise within the realm'.

*Cui bono?* is a notorious trap for journalists. It is naturally surprising to any one who has not pushed his classics far to be told that the literal translation of it is not 'To what good (end)?', that is 'What is the good of it?', but 'Who benefited?'. The former rendering is not an absolutely impossible one on the principles of Latin grammar, which adds to the confusion. But if that were its real meaning it would be indeed astonishing that it should have become a famous phrase; the use of it instead of 'What is the good?' would be as silly and gratuitous as our above-mentioned *to the foot of the letter*. Every scholar knows, however, that *cui bono?* does deserve to be used, in its true sense. It is

a shrewd and pregnant phrase, like *cherchez la femme* or *esprit d'escalier*. *Cherchez la femme* wraps up in itself a perhaps incorrect but still interesting theory of life—that whenever anything goes wrong there is a woman at the bottom of it; find her, and all will be explained. *Cui bono?* means, as we said, ‘Who benefited?’ It is a Roman lawyer’s maxim, who held that when you were at a loss to tell where the responsibility for a crime lay, your best chance was to inquire who had reaped the benefit of it. It has been worth while to devote a few lines to this phrase, because nothing could better show at once what is worth transplanting into English, and what dangers await any one who uses Latin or French merely because he has a taste for ornament. In the following quotation the meaning, though most obscurely expressed, is probably correct; and *cui bono?* stands for: ‘Where can the story have come from? why, who will profit by a misunderstanding between Italy and France? Germany, of course; so doubtless Germany invented the story’. *Cui bono?* is quite capable of implying all that; but a merciful writer will give his readers a little more help:

(Berlin) The news which awakens the most hopeful interest is the story of a concession to a Franco-Belgian syndicate in the harbour of Tripoli. There is a manifest desire that the statement should be confirmed and that it should have the effect of exciting the Italian people and alienating them from France. *Cui bono?*—*T.*

### FALSE, UGLY, OR NEEDLESS FORMATIONS

\* 1. As a natural link between this section and the last, the practice of taking French words and spelling them as English may stand first. With French words that fill a definite blank in English, the time comes when that should be done if it can. With some words it cannot; no one has yet seen his way to giving *ennui* an English look.

*Naïveté* is another word for which there is a clear use; and

though the Englishman can pronounce it without difficulty if he chooses, he generally does, prefer doing without it altogether to attempting a precision that strikes him as either undignified or pretentious. It is therefore to be wished that it might be disencumbered of its diaeresis, its accent, and its italics. It is true that the first sight of naivety is an unpleasant shock; but we ought to be glad that the thing has begun to be done, and in speaking sacrifice our pride of knowledge and call it *naivety*.

The case of *banality* is very different. In one sense it has a stronger claim than *naivety*, its adjective *banal* being much older in English than *naïve*; but the old use of *banal* is as a legal term connected with feudalism. That use is dead, and its second life is an independent one; it is now a mere borrowing from French. Whether we are to accept it or not should be decided by whether we want it; and with *common*, *commonplace*, *trite*, *trivial*, *mean*, *vulgar*, all provided with nouns, which again can be eked out with *truism* and *platitude*, a shift can surely be made without it.

2. Formations involving grammatical blunders. Of these the possibilities are of course infinite; we must assume that our readers know the ordinary rules of grammar, and merely, not to pass over the point altogether, give one or two typical and not too trite instances:

My landlady entered bearing what she called 'her best lamp' *alight*.—CORELLI.

This seems to be formed as a past participle from *to alight*, in the sense of *to kindle*. It will surprise most people to learn that there is, or was, such a verb; not only was there, but the form that should have been used in our sentence, *alighted*, is probably by origin the participle of it. The *Oxford Dictionary*, however, after saying this, observes that it has now been assimilated to words like *afire*, formed from the preposition *a-* and a noun. Whether those two facts are true or not, it is

quite certain that there is no such word as *glit* in the sense of lighted or lit, and that the use of it in our days is a grammatical blunder.<sup>1</sup>

But every year pleaded *stronger* and *stronger* for the Earl's cono<sup>3</sup>tion.—J. R. GREEN.

Comparative adverbs of this type must be formed only from those positive adverbs which do not use *-ly* as *hard*, *fast*. We talk of *going strong*, and we may therefore talk of *going stronger*; but outside slang we have to choose between *stronglier*—poetical, exalted, or affected—and *more strongly*.

The silence that *underlaid* the even voice of the breakers along the sea front.—KIPLING.

*Lie* and *lay* have cost us all some perplexity in childhood. The distinction is more difficult in the compounds with *over* and *under*, because in them *-lie* is transitive as well as *-lay*, but in a different sense. Any one who is not sure that he is sound on the point by instinct must take the trouble to resolve them into *lie over* or *lay over*, &c., which at once clears up the doubt. Mistakes with the simple verb are more surprising.

Hans *laid* down by my side, and lighted a good-night cigar.—KIPLING.

I suspected him of having *laid* in wait for the purpose.—R. G. WHITE.

A confusion, perhaps, between *lay wait* and *lie in wait*.

I am not sure that *yours* and my efforts would suffice separately; but yours and mine together cannot possibly fail.

The first *yours* is quite wrong; it should be *your*. This mistake is common. The absolute possessives, *ours* and *yours*, *hers*, *mine* and *thine* (with which the poetic or euphonic use for *my* and *thy* before vowels has nothing to do), are to be used only as pronouns or as predicative adjectives, not as attributes to an expressed and following noun. That they were used by old writers as in our example is irrelevant. The correct modern usage has now established itself. We add

<sup>1</sup> *Alit* is due, no doubt, to mere inadvertence: the form *litten* ('red-litten windows', &c.), for which the *Oxford Dictionary* quotes Poe, Lytton, W. Morris, and Crockett, but no old writer, is sham archaism.

three sentences from Burke. The relation between *no* and *none* is the same as that between *your* and *yours*. In the first sentence, modern usage would write (as the correct *no* or *but a few* is uncomfortable) either *few* or *no*, or *few if any*, or *no rays* or *but a few*. For the second we might possibly tolerate *to their as well as to your own*; or we might write *to their crown as well as to your own*. The third is quite tolerable as it is; but any one who does not like the sound can write *and their ancestors and ours*. It must always be remembered in this as in other constructions, that the choice is not between a well-sounding blunder and an ill-sounding correctness, but between an ill and a well sounding correctness. The blunder should be ruled out, and if the first form of the correct construction that presents itself does not sound well, another way of putting it must be looked for; patience will always find it. The flexibility gained by habitual selection of this kind, which a little cultivation will make easy and instinctive, is one of the most essential elements in a good style.

Black bodies, reflecting *none* or *but a few* rays.

You altered the succession to *theirs*, as well as to your own crown.

They and we, and *their* and our ancestors, have been happy under that system.

### 3. Formations violating analogy.

And then it is its panache, its careless *a-moral* Renaissance romance.—*T*.

But she is perfectly natural, and while perfectly *amoral*, no more immoral than a bird or a kitten.—*T*.

A- (not) is Greek; *moral* is Latin. It is at least desirable that in making new words the two languages should not be mixed. The intricate needs of science may perhaps be allowed to override a literary principle of this sort; and accordingly *a-* is compounded with Latin words in scientific and technical terms, as *a-sexual*; but purely literary workers may be expected to abstain. The obvious excuse for this

formation is that the Latin negative prefix is already taken up in *immoral*, which means contrary to morality, while a word is wanted to mean unconcerned with morality. But with *non* freely prefixed to adjectives in English (though not in Latin), there can be no objection to *non-moral*.

Concessions, which, besides damaging Hungary by raising *racial* and *language* questions of all kinds, would . . . —*T.*

The action of foreign countries as to their *coastal* trade.—*T.*

Her *riverine* trade.—*W. G.*

*-al* is mainly confined to unmistakable Latin stems. The ugly words *racial* and *coastal* might well be avoided except in the rare cases where *race* and *coast* used adjectivally will not do the work (they would in the present instances); and they should not be made precedents for new formations. If *language* is better than *linguistic*, much more *race* than *racial*; similarly, *river* than *riverine*.

What she was pleased to term their superior intelligence, and more real and *reliable* probity.—*C. BRONTË (Villette, 1853).*

It is absurd at this time of day to make a fuss about the word. It is with us and will remain with us, whatever pedants and purists may say. In such cases *obsta principiis* is the only hope; *reliable* might once have been suppressed, perhaps; it cannot now. But it is so fought over, even to-day, that a short discussion of it may be looked for. The objection to it is obvious: you do not rely a thing; therefore the thing cannot be reliable; it should be rely-on-able (like *come-at-able*). Some of the analogies pleaded for it are perhaps irrelevant—as *laughable*, *available*. For these *may* be formed from the nouns *laugh*, *avail*, since *-able* is not only gerundival (capable of being laughed at), but also adjectival (connected with a laugh); this has certainly happened with *seasonable*; but that will not help *reliable*, which by analogy should be *relianceable*. It is more to the point to remark that with *reliable* must go *dispensable* (with *indispensable*) and *dependable*, both quite old words, and *disposable* (in its commoner sense); no one, so far,

as we know, objects to these and others like them; *reliable* is made into a scapegoat. The word itself, moreover, besides its wide popularity, dates from as far back as the sixteenth century.

4. Long and short rivals. The following examples illustrate a foolish tendency. From the adjective *perfect* we form the verb *to perfect*, and from that again the noun *perfection*; to take a further step forward to a verb *to perfection* instead of returning to the verb *to perfect* is a superfluity of naughtiness. From the noun *sense* we make the adjective *sensible*; it is generally quite needless to go forward to *sensibleness* instead of back to our original noun *sense*. To *quicken* is often used by hasty writers who have not time to remember that *quiet* is a verb. With *ex tempore* ready to serve either as adverb or as adjective, why make *extemporaneous* or *extemporaneously*?

The inner, religiously moral *perfecting* of individuals.—T.

She liked the quality of mind which may be broadly called *sensibleness*.

—T.

Broadly, or lengthily?

M. Delcassé, speaking *extemporaneously* but with notes, said . . .—T.

It is often a very easy thing to act *prudentially*, but alas! too often only after we have toiled to our prudence through a forest of delusions.—DE QUINCEY.

*Prudent* gives *prudence*, and *prudence* *prudential*; the latter has its use: prudential considerations are those in which prudence is allowed to outweigh other motives; they may be prudent without being prudential, and vice versa. But before using *prudentially* we should be quite sure that we mean something different from *prudently*. So again *partially*, which should be reserved as far as possible for the meaning *with partiality*, is now commonly used for *partly*:<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The use deprecated has perhaps crept in from such phrases as *the sun was partially eclipsed*, an adaptation of a *partial eclipse*; and to such phrases it should be restricted. \* The case was partially heard on Oct. 17'

The series of administrative reforms planned by the Convention had been *partially* carried into effect before the meeting of Parliament in 1654; but the work was pushed on.—J. R. GREEN.

That the gravity of the situation is *partially* appreciated by the bureaucracy may be inferred from . . .—T.

*Excepting*, instead of *except*, is to be condemned when there is no need for it. We say *not excepting*, or *not even excepting*, or *without excepting*; but where the exception is allowed, not rejected, the short form is the right one, as a comparison of the following examples will show:

Of all societies . . . *not even excepting* the Roman Republic, England has been the most emphatically . . . political.—MORLEY.

The Minister was obliged to present the Budget before May each year, *excepting* in the event of the Cortes having been dissolved.—T.

The sojourn of belligerent ships in French waters has never been limited *excepting* by certain clearly defined rules.—T.

*Excepting* the English, French, and Austrian journalists present, no one had been admitted.—T.

Innumerable other needless lengthenings might be produced, from which we choose only *preventative* for *preventive*, and *to experimentalize* for *to experiment*.

On the other hand, when usage has differentiated a long and a short form either of which might originally have served, the distinction must be kept. *Immovable* and *irremovable* judges are different things; the shorter word has been wrongly chosen in:

By suspending conscription and restoring the *immovability* of the Judges.—T.

### 5. Merely ugly formations.

\* We content ourselves with deprecating the addition of *-ly* to participles in *-ed*. Some people are so alive to the evil sound of it that they write *determinately* for *determinedly*; that will not do either, because *determinate* does not mean

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is ambiguous; and the second example in the text is almost so, nearly enough to show that the limitation is desirable. The rule should be never to write *partially* without first considering the claims of *partly*.



*determined* in the required sense. A periphrasis, or an adjective or Latin participle with *-ly*, as *resolutely*, should be used. *Implied* is as good a word as *implicit*, but *impliedly* is by no means so good as *implicitly*.

Where the gate opens, or the gateless path turns aside *trustedly*.—RUSKIN.

'That's not a very kind speech,' I said somewhat *vexedly*.—CORELLI.

However, I *determinedly* smothered all premonitions.—CORELLI.

Thurlow . . . applied himself *determinately* to the business of life.—SOUTHEY.

I saw one or two passers-by looking at me so *surprisedly* that I came to the conclusion . . .—CORELLI.

I stared *bewilderedly* up at the stars.—CORELLI.

It should be added that to really established adverbs of this form, as *advisedly*, *assuredly*, *hurriedly*, there is no objection whatever ; but new ones are ugly.

## SLANG

The place of slang is in real life. There, an occasional indulgence in it is an almost necessary concession to our gregarious humanity ; he who declines altogether to let his speech be influenced by his neighbours' tricks, and takes counsel only of pure reason, is setting up for more than man. *Awfully nice* is an expression than which few could be sillier ; but to have succeeded in going through life without saying it a certain number of times is as bad as to have no redeeming vice. Further, the writer who deals in conversation may sometimes find it necessary, by way of characterizing his speakers, to put slang in their mouths ; if he is wise he will make the least possible use of this resource ; and to interlard the non-conversational parts of a book or article with slang, quotation marks or no quotation marks, is as bad as interlarding with French. Foreign words and slang are, as spurious ornaments, on the same level. The italics, but not the quotation marks, in these examples are ours :

When the madness motif was being treated on the stage, Shakespeare (as was the custom of his theatre) treated it '*for all it was worth*', careless of the boundaries between feigning and reality.—*T.*

But even this situation '*peters out*', the wife being sent away with her fate undecided.—*T.*

M. Baron the younger is amusing as the '*bounder*' Olivier.—*T.*

Asking ourselves this question about Mr. Thurston's play, we find that it has given us a ha'porth of pleasure to an intolerable deal of boredom. With its primary postulate, '*steep*' as it is, we will not quarrel.—*T.*

They will find no subtlety in it, no literary art, no profundity of feeling; but they will assuredly find breadth, colour, and strength. It is a play that hits you, as the children say, '*bang in the eye*'.—*T.*

They derive no advantage from schemes of land settlement from which the man who has broken the land in *gets 'the boot'*, the voter gets the land, the Government gets the vote, and the London labour market gets the risk.—*T.*

The effect of using quotation marks with slang is merely to convert a mental into a moral weakness. When they are not used, we may mercifully assume that the writer does not know the difference between slang and good English, and sins in ignorance: when they are, he is telling us, I know it is naughty, but then it is nice. Most of us would rather be taken for knaves than for fools; and so the quotation marks are usually there. It is a still greater mistake to make verbal apologies, to use a slang phrase because it suits you, and at the same time prove your virtue by boxing the ears of people in general because it is slang. The examples are taken from McCarthy's *History of Our Own Times*:—

Lord Chelmsford ... only wanted time, in homely language, to pull himself together.

He was a man of remarkable force of character, a somewhat '*masterful*' temperament, to use an expressive provincial word.

That which we make up, as the childish phrase is, '*out of our own heads*'.

A series of enterprises which in the homely and undignified language of American politics would probably be called '*stumping the country*'.

All this was smoothed away, if such an expression may be used, by the Reform Bill.

Ignorantly and thoughtlessly '*bumptious*', to use a vulgar expression, in the assertion of their newly-found equality.

Inquiries . . . were; to use a cant phrase of the time, the order of the day.

Palmerston is to all appearance what would be vulgarly called 'out of the swim'.

To the ordinary man, of average intelligence and middle-class position, slang comes from every direction, from above, from below, and from all sides, as well as from the centre. What comes from some directions he will know for slang, what comes from others he may not. He may be expected to recognize words from below. Some of these are shortenings, by the lower classes, of words whose full form conveys no clear meaning, and is therefore useless, to them. An antiquated example is *mob*, for *mobile vulgus*. That was once slang, and is now good English. A modern one is *bike*, which will very likely be good English also in time. But though its brevity is a strong recommendation, and its uncouthness probably no more than subjective and transitory, it is as yet slang. Such words should not be used in print till they have become so familiar that there is not the slightest temptation to dress them up in quotation marks. Though they are the most easily detected, they are also the best slang; when the time comes, they take their place in the language as words that will last, and not, like many of the more highly descended words, die away uselessly after a brief popularity.

Another set of words that may be said to come from below, since it owes its existence to the vast number of people who are incapable of appreciating fine shades of meaning, is exemplified by *nice*, *awful*, *blooming*. The slang use of these makes us shy in different degrees of writing them in their legitimate sense: *a nice distinction* we write almost without qualms; *an awful storm* we think twice about; and as to *a blooming girl*, we hardly venture it nowadays.

So much for the slang from below; the ordinary man can detect it. He is not so infallible about what comes to him from above. We are by no means sure that we shall be

correct in our particular attribution of the half-dozen words now to be mentioned; but it is safe to say that they are all at present enjoying some vogue as slang, and that they all come from regions that to most of us are overhead. *Phenomenal*, soon, we hope, to perish unregretted, is (at least indirectly, through the abuse of *phenomenon*) from *Metaphysics*; *immanence*, a word often met in singular company, from *Comparative Theology*; *epochmaking* perhaps from the *Philosophic Historian*; *true inwardness* from *Literary Criticism*; *cad* (which is, it appears, Etonian for *cadet*) from the *Upper Classes*; *psychological moment* from *Science*; *thrasonical* and *cryptic* from *Academic Circles*; *philistine* from the region of culture. Among these the one that will be most generally allowed to be slang—*cad*—is in fact the least so; it has by this time, like *mob*, passed its probation and taken its place as an orthodox word, so that all who do not find adequate expression for their feelings in the orthodox have turned away to *bounder* and other forms that still admit the emphasis of quotation marks. As for the rest of them, they are being subjected to that use, at once over-frequent and inaccurate, which produces one kind of slang. But the average man, seeing from what exalted quarters they come, is dazzled into admiration and hardly knows them for what they are.

By the slang that comes from different sides or from the centre we mean especially the many words taken originally from particular professions, pursuits, or games, but extended beyond them. Among these a man is naturally less critical of what comes from his own daily concerns, that is, in his view, from the centre. *Frontispiece*, for face, perhaps originated in the desire of prize-ring reporters to vary the words in their descriptive flights. *Negotiate* (a difficulty, &c.) possibly comes from the hunting-field; people whose conversation runs much upon a limited subject feel the need of new phrases for the too familiar things. And both these words, as well as *individual*, which must be treated more at length in the next section, are

illustrations of a tendency that may be called polysyllabic humour. We now add a short list of slang phrases or words that can most of them be referred with more or less of certainty to particular occupations. Whether they are recognized as slang will certainly depend in part on whether the occupation is familiar, though sometimes the familiarity will disguise, and sometimes it will conceal, the slanginess.

*To hedge, the double event*, (turf); *frontal attack* (war); *play the game, stumped*, (cricket); *to run*—the show, &c.—(engine-driving); *knock out, take it lying down*, (prize-ring); *log-rolling, slating, birrelling*, (literature); *to tackle*—a problem, &c.—(football); *to take a back seat* (coaching?); *bedrock, to exploit, how it pans out*, (mining); *whole-hogging, at a conservative estimate, world policy*, (politics); *floored* (1. prize ring; 2. school); *the under dog* (dog-fighting); *up to date* (advertising); *record*—time, &c.—(athletics); *euchred, going one better, going Nap.*, (cards); *to corner*—a thing—(commerce)—a person—(ratting); *chic* (society journalism); *on your own, of sorts, climb down, globe-trotter, to lase*, (perhaps not assignable).

Good and sufficient occasions will arise—rarely—for using most of these phrases and the rest of the slang vocabulary. To those, however, who desire that what they write may endure it is suggested that, as style is the great antiseptic, so slang is the great corrupting matter; it is perishable itself, and infects what is round it—the catchwords that delight one generation stink in the nostrils of the next; *individual*, which almost made the fortune of many a Victorian humorist, is one of the modern editor's shibboleths for detecting the unfit.

### PARTICULAR WORDS

Individual, mutual, unique, aggravating, the same, such, also, &c., various.

To use *individual* wrongly in the twentieth century stamps a writer, more definitely than almost any other single solecism, not as being generally ignorant or foolish, but as being without

the literary sense. For the word has been pilloried time after time; every one who is interested in style at all—which includes every one who aspires to be readable—must at least be aware that there is some mystery about the word, even if he has not penetrated it. He has, therefore, two courses open to him: he may leave the word alone; or he may find out what it means; if he insists on using it without finding out, he will commit himself. The adjectival use of it presents no difficulty; the adjective, as well as the adverb *individually*, is always used rightly if at all; it is the noun that goes wrong. An *individual* is not simply a person; it is a single, separate, or private person, a person as opposed to a combination of persons; this qualification, this opposition, must be effectively present to the mind, or the word is not in place. In the nineteenth, especially the early nineteenth century, this distinction was neglected; mainly under the impulse of 'polysyllabic humour', the word, which does mean *person* in some sort of way, was seized upon as a facetious substitute for it; not only that; it spread even to good writers who had no facetious intention; it became the kind of slang described in the last section, which is highly popular until it suddenly turns disgusting. In reading many of these writers we feel that we must make allowances for them on this point; they only failed to be right when every one else was wrong. But we, if we do it, sin against the light.

To leave no possible doubt about the distinction, we shall give examples divided into (1) right uses, (2) wrong uses, (3) sentences in which, though the author has used the word rightly, a perverse reader might take it wrongly. It will be observed that in (1) to substitute *man* or *person* would distinctly weaken the sense; in the sentence from Macaulay it would be practically impossible. The words italicized are those that prove the contrast with bodies, or organizations, to have been present to the writer's mind, though it may often happen that he does not actually show it by specific mention of them. On

the other hand, in (2) *person* or *man* or *he* might always be substituted without harm to the sense, though sometimes a more exact word (not *individual*) might be preferable. In (3) little difference would be made by the substitution.

(1) Many of the *constituent bodies* were under the absolute control of individuals.—MACAULAY.

The document has failed to secure the surrender of any *body of men*. Merely a few individuals have yielded.—T.

The wise Commons, considering that they are, if not a French *Third Estate*, at least an aggregate of individuals pretending to some title of that kind, determine . . .—CARLYLE.

(2) That greenish-coloured individual is an advocate of Arras; his name is Maximilien Robespierre.—CARLYLE. (person)

Surely my fate is somehow strangely interwoven with that of this mysterious individual.—SCOTT. (person)

The Secretary of State for War was sending the same man down to see what he could do in the Isle of Wight. The individual duly arrived.—T. (he)

In the present case, however, the individual who had secured the cab had a companion.—BEACONSFIELD. (man)

He was a genteelly dressed individual; rather corpulent, with dark features.—BORROW. (man)

(3) Almost all the recent Anarchist crimes were perpetrated by *isolated* halfwitted individuals who aimed at universal notoriety.—T.

Which of these two individuals, in plain white cravat, that have come up to regenerate France, might one guess would become their king? For a king or leader they, as all *bodies of men*, must have.—CARLYLE.

The word *mutual* requires caution. As with *individual*, any one who is not prepared to clear his ideas upon its meaning will do well to avoid it; it is a very tell-tale word, readily convicting the unwary, and on the other hand it may quite easily be done without. Everyone knows by now that *our mutual friend* is a solecism. *Mutual* implies an action or relation between two or more persons or things, A doing or standing to B as B does or stands to A. Let A and B be the persons indicated by *our*, C the *friend*. No such reciprocal relation is here implied between A and B (who for all we know may be enemies), but only a separate though similar relation between each of them and C. There is no such thing as a mutual friend

in the singular ; but the phrase *mutual friends* may without nonsense be used to describe either A and C, B and C, or, if A and B happen to be also friends, A and B and C. *Our mutual friend* is nonsense ; *mutual friends*, though not nonsense, is bad English, because it is tautological. It takes two to make a friendship, as to make a quarrel ; and therefore all friends are mutual friends, and *friends* alone means as much as *mutual friends*. *Mutual well-wishers* on the other hand is good English as well as good sense, because it is possible for me to be a man's well-wisher though he hates me. Mutual love, understanding, insurance, benefits, dislike, mutual benefactors, backbiters, abettors, may all be correct, though they are also sometimes used incorrectly, like *our mutual friend*, where the right word would be *common*.

Further, it is to be carefully observed that the word *mutual* is an equivalent in meaning, and sometimes a convenient one for grammatical reasons, of the pronoun *each other* with various prepositions. To use it as well as *each other* is even more clearly tautological than the already mentioned *mutual friendship*.

If this be the case, much of the lost mutual understanding and unity of feeling may be restored.—T.

Correct, if *mutual* is confined to *understanding* : they no longer understand *each other*.

Both felt that in presence of certain incalculable factors in Europe it would be of mutual advantage to draw closer together.—T.

Slightly clumsy ; but it means that they would get advantage *from each other* by drawing together, and may stand.

... conversing with his Andalusian lady-love in rosy whispers about their mutual passion for Spanish chocolate all the while.—MEREDITH.

Surely you have heard Mrs. Toddles talking to Mrs. Doddles about their mutual maids.—THACKERAY.

Indefensible.

There may be, moreover, while *each* has the key of the fellow breast, a mutually sensitive nerve.—MEREDITH.



A nerve cannot respond to each other ; nerves can ; a *common nerve* would have done ; or *mutually sensitive nerves*.

It is now definitely announced that King Edward will meet President Loubet this afternoon near Paris. Our Paris Correspondent says the meeting will take place by mutual desire.—*T.*

Right or wrong according to what is meant by *desire*. (1) If it means that King Edward and M. Loubet desired, that is, had a yearning for, each other, it is correct ; but the writer probably did not intend so poetic a flight. (2) If it means that they merely desired a meeting, it is wrong, exactly as *our mutual friend* is wrong. The relation is not one between A and B ; it is only that A and B hold separately the same relation to C, the meeting. It should be *common desire*. (3) If *desire* is here equivalent to *request*, and each is represented as having requested the other to meet him, it is again correct ; but only politeness to the writer would induce any one to take this alternative.

The carpenter holds the hammer in one hand, the nail in the other, and they do their work equally well. So it is with every craftsman ; the hands are mutually busy.—*T.*

Wrong. The hands are not busy *with* or *upon each other*, but with or upon the work. As *commonly* would be ambiguous here, *equally* or *alike* should be used, or simply *both*. *Mutually serviceable*, again, would have been right.

There were other means of communication between Claribel and her new prophet. Books were mutually lent to each other.—BEACONSFIELD.

This surprising sentence means that Vanity Fair was lent to Paradise Lost, and Paradise Lost to Vanity Fair. If we further assume for politeness' sake that *mutually* is not mere tautology with *to each other*, the only thing left for it to mean is *by each other*. The doubt then remains whether (1) Paradise Lost was lent to Vanity Fair by Paradise Lost, and Vanity Fair to Paradise Lost by Vanity Fair, or (2) Paradise Lost was lent to Vanity Fair by Vanity Fair, and Vanity Fair to Paradise Lost by Paradise Lost. This may be

considered captious; but we still wish the author had said, They lent each other books.

A thing is *unique*, or not *unique*; there are no degrees of uniqueness; nothing is ever somewhat or rather *unique*, though many things are almost or in some respects *unique*. The word is a member of a depreciating series. *Singular* had once the strong meaning that *unique* has still in accurate but not in other writers. In consequence of slovenly use, *singular* no longer means singular, but merely remarkable; it is worn out; before long *rather unique* will be familiar; *unique*, that is, will be worn out in turn, and we shall have to resort to *unexampled* and keep that clear of qualifications as long as we can. Happily it is still admitted that sentences like those given below are solecisms; they contain a self-contradiction. For the other regrettable use of *unique*, as when the advertisement columns offer us what they call *unique opportunities*, it may generally be assumed with safety that they are lying; but lying is not in itself a literary offence, so that with these we have nothing to do.

Thrills which gave him *rather a unique* pleasure.—HUTTON.

A *very unique* child, thought I.—C. BRONTË.

. . . is to be translated into Russian by M. Robert Böker, of St. Petersburg. This is a *somewhat unique* thing to happen to an English textbook.—W. G. •

To *aggravate* is not to annoy or enrage (a person), but to make worse (a condition or trouble). The active participle should very rarely, and the rest of the active practically never, be used without an expressed object, and that of the right kind. In the sentence, *An aggravating circumstance was that the snow was dirty*, the meaning is not that the dirt was annoying, but that it added to some other misery previously expressed or implied. But, as the dirt happens to be annoying also, this use is easily misunderstood, and is probably the origin of the notorious vulgarism; since it almost inevitably lays a writer open to suspicion, it is best avoided. Of the

following quotations, the first is quite correct, the rest as clearly wrong.

A premature initiative would be useless and even dangerous, being calculated rather to *aggravate* than to simplify the situation.—*T.*

Perhaps the most trying and *aggravating* period of the whole six months during which the siege has lasted was this period of enforced idleness waiting for the day of entry.—*T.*

He appears to be conceived in the spirit of romance, and a very stupid, tiresome, *aggravating* man he is.—*T.*

Nevertheless, it is an *aggravating* book.—*W. G.*

*The same*, and *such*, in their pronominal use, should be reserved for commercial and legal contexts.

My dun mist crape would suffice, and I sought *the same* in the great oak wardrobe.—*C. BRONTË.*

The man who has approached nearest to the teaching of the Master, and carried *the same* to its logical and practical conclusion is General Booth.—*D. T.*

I believe, and have believed since, a tiny child, made miserable by the loss of a shilling, I prayed my Heavenly Father to help me to recover *the same*.—*D. T.*

But when it comes to us following his life and example, in all its intricate details, all will, I think, agree that *such* is impossible.—*D. T.*

An appeal to philanthropy is hardly necessary, the grounds for *such* being so self-evident.—*T.*

*Also* is an adverb; the use of it as a conjunction is slovenly, if not illiterate.

We are giving these explanations gently as friends, *also* patiently as becomes neighbours.—*T.*

'Special' is a much over-worked word, it being used to mean great in degree, *also* peculiar in kind.—*R. G. WHITE.*

The use of *&c.*, except in business communications and such contexts, has much the same illiterate effect.

There are others with faults of temper, *&c.*, evident enough, beside whom we live content.—*C. BRONTË.*

*Various* should not be used pronominally on the analogy of *many*, *several*, *&c.*

The now destroyed St. James's Hall saw *various* of these.—*W. G.*

As regards child labour, *various* of the British Dominions beyond the sea are ahead of us.—*W. G.*

## CHAPTER II

### SYNTAX

#### CASE

THERE is not much opportunity in English for going wrong here, because we have shed most of our cases. The personal pronouns, and *who* and its compounds, are the only words that visibly retain three—called subjective, objective, possessive. In nouns the first two are indistinguishable, and are called the common case. One result of this simplicity is that, the sense of case being almost lost, the few mistakes that can be made are made often—some of them so often that they are now almost right by prescription.

##### 1. In apposition.

A pronoun appended to a noun should be in the same case; examples of the wrong construction are :—

But to behold her mother—*she* to whom she owed her being!—S. FERRIER.

The virtual ‘warning off’ Newmarket Heath . . . of a Prince of Wales, *he* who was afterwards George the Fourth.—W. G.

##### 2. The complement with *am*, *are*, *is*, &c., should be subjective.

I am she, she *me*, till death and beyond it.—MEREDITH.

*Whom* would you rather be ?

To how many maimed and mourning millions is the first and sole angel visitant, *him* Easterns call Azrael.—C. BRONTË.

• That’s *him*.

In the last but one, *him* would no doubt have been defended by the writer, since the full form would be *he whom*, as an attraction to the vanished *whom*. But such attraction is not right; if *he* alone is felt to be uncomfortable, *whom* should not be omitted; or, in this exalted context, it might be *he that*.

On *that’s him*, see 4, below.

3. When a verb or preposition governs two pronouns united by *and*, &c., the second is apt to go wrong—a bad blunder. *Between you and I* is often heard in talk; and, in literature :

And now, my dear, let you and I say a few words about this unfortunate affair.—TROLLOPE.

It is kept locked up in a marble casket, quite out of reach of you or I.—S. FERRIER.

She found everyone's attention directed to Mary, and *she* herself entirely overlooked.—S. FERRIER.

4. The interrogative *who* is often used for *whom*, as, *Who* did you see? A distinction should here be made between conversation, written or spoken, and formal writing. Many educated people feel that in saying *It is I*, *Whom* do you mean?, instead of *It's me*, *Who* do you mean?, they will be talking like a book, and they justifiably prefer geniality to grammar. But in print, unless it is dialogue, the correct forms are advisable.

5. Even with words that have no visible distinction between subjective and objective case, it is possible to go wrong; for the case can always be inferred, though not seen. Consequently a word should never be so placed that it must be taken twice, once as subject and once as object. This is a common blunder, and occurs especially with the relative, from its early position in the sentence; but, as the first two examples show, it may result from the exceptional placing of other words also. The mere repetition of the relative, or insertion of *it* or other pronoun, generally mends the sentence; in the first example, change *should only be* to *only to be*.

*The occupation of the mouths of the Yalu* his Majesty considered undesirable, and should only be carried out in the last resort.—T.

*This* the strong sense of Lady MacLaughlan had long perceived, and was the principal reason of her selecting so weak a woman.—S. FERRIER.

Qualities *which* it would cost me a great deal to acquire, and would lead to nothing.—MORLEY.

A recorded saying of our Lord *which* some higher critics regard as of doubtful authenticity, and is certainly of doubtful interpretation.

Analogous to these, but needing separate comment, are :—

Knowledge *to* the certainty of which no authority could add, or take away, one jot or tittle.—HUXLEY.

*To* is applicable to *add*, not to *take away*. The full form is given by substituting for *or* ‘and from the certainty of which no authority could’. This is clearly too cumbrous. Inserting *or from* after *to* is the simplest correction; but the result is rather formal. Better, perhaps, ‘the certainty of which could not be increased or diminished one jot by any authority’.

From his conversation I should have pronounced him to be fitted to excel *in* whatever walk of ambition he had chosen to exert his abilities.

A second *in* is required. This common slovenliness results from the modern superstition against putting a preposition at the end.

A principle *upon which* Clausewitz insisted with all his strength, and could never sufficiently impress upon his Royal scholar.—*T.*

The italicized *upon* is right with *insist*, but wrong with *impress*. It is the result of the same superstition. Mend either by writing *upon* after *insisted* instead of before *which*, or by inserting *which* *he* after *and*.

#### 6. After *as* and *than*.

These are properly conjunctions, and ‘take the same case after them as before’. But those words must be rightly understood. (a), *I love you more than him*, means something different from (b), *I love you more than he*. It must be borne in mind that the ‘case before’ is that of the word that is compared with the ‘case after’, and not necessarily that of the word actually next before in position. In (a) *you* is compared with *him*: in (b) *I* (not *you*) is compared with *he*. The correct usage is therefore important, and the tendency illustrated in the following examples to make *than* and *as* prepositions should be resisted—though no ambiguity can actually result here.

When such as *her* die.—SWIFT.

Lindore would be more eloquent than *me*.—S. FERRIER.

It must further be noticed that both *as* and *than* are conjunctions of the sort that can either, like *and* &c., merely join coordinates, or, like *when* &c., attach a subordinate clause to what it depends on. This double power sometimes affects case.

It is to him and such men as *he* that we owe the change.—HUXLEY.

This example is defensible, *as* being here a subordinating conjunction, and *as he* being equivalent to *as he is*. But it is distinctly felt to need defence, which *as him* would not; *as* would be a coordinating conjunction, and simply join the pronoun *him* to the noun *men*. So, with *than*:

Such as have bound me, as well as others much better than *me*, by an inviolable attachment to him from that time forward.—BURKE.

On the other hand, we could not say indifferently, *I am as good as he*, and *I am as good as him*; the latter would imply that *as* was a preposition, which it is not. And it is not always possible to choose between the coordinating and the subordinating use. In the next two examples only the coordinating will do, no verb being capable of standing after *he*; but the writers have not observed this.

I beheld a man in the dress of a postillion, whom I instantly recognized as *he* to whom I had rendered assistance.—BORROW.

If ever Captain O'Connor gives us a second volume, we beg him to engage no other artist than *he* who illustrated the first.—S.

A difficult question, however, arises with relatives after *than*. In the next two examples *whom* is as manifestly wrong as *who* is manifestly intolerable:

Dr. Dillon, than *whom* no Englishman has a profounder acquaintance with . . . —T.

It was a pleasure to hear Canon Liddon, than *whom*, in his day, there was no finer preacher.

The only correct solution is to recast the sentences. For instance, . . . *whose acquaintance with . . . is unrivalled among Englishmen*; and . . . *unsurpassed in his day as a preacher*. But perhaps the convenience of *than whom* is so great that to rule it out amounts to saying that man is made for grammar and not grammar for man.

## NUMBER

Very little comment will be needed ; we have only to convince readers that mistakes are common, and caution therefore necessary.

1. The copula should always agree with the subject, not with the complement. These are wrong :

The *pages* which describe how the 34th Osaka Regiment wiped out the tradition that had survived since the Saigo rebellion *is* a typical *piece* of description.—*T.*

\*A *boy* dressed up as a girl *and* a *girl* dressed up as a girl *is*, to the eye at least, the same *thing*.—*T.*

People do not believe *now* as they did, but the moral *inconsistencies* of our contemporaries *is* no *proof* thereof.—*D. T.*

It must be remembered that in questions the subject often comes after the verb and the complement before it ; but the same rule must be kept. E. g., if the last example were put as a question instead of as a negative statement, 'What proof *is* the inconsistencies ?' would be wrong, and 'What proof *are* &c. ?' right.

Some sentences in which the subject contains *only*, a superlative, &c., have the peculiarity that subject and complement may almost be considered to have changed places ; and this defence would probably be put in for the next two examples ; but, whether actually wrong or not, they are unpleasant. The noun that stands before the verb should be regarded as the subject, and the verb be adapted to it.

The only *thing* Siamese about the Consul, except the hatchment and the flag, *were* his *servants*.—SLADEN.

The only *difficulty* in Finnish *are* the *changes* undergone by the stem.—SWEET.

2. Mistakes in the number of verbs are extremely common when a singular noun intervenes between a plural subject (or a plural noun between a singular subject) and its verb.

And do we wonder, when the *foundation* of *politics* *are* in the letter only, that many evils should arise ?—JOWETT.

There is *much* in these ceremonial *accretions* and *teachings* of the Church which *tend* to confuse and distract . . .—*D. T.*



An immense *amount of confusion and indifference prevail*.—D. T.

Various *medicaments*, the lethal *power* of *which were* extolled at large.—T.

The *partition* which the two ministers made of the *powers* of government *were* singularly happy.—MACAULAY.

*One* at least of the *qualities* which fit it for training ordinary men *unfit* it for training an extraordinary man.—BAGEHOT.

The small *amount of classics* which *are* still held to be necessary.—T.

Sundry other reputable *persons*, I know not whom, *whose* joint *virtue* still *keep* the law in good odour.—EMERSON.

3. *They, them, their, theirs*, are often used in referring back to singular pronominals (as *each, one, anybody, everybody*), or to singular nouns or phrases (as *a parent, neither Jack nor Jill*), of which the doubtful or double gender causes awkwardness. It is a real deficiency in English that we have no pronoun, like the French *soi, son*, to stand for *him-or-her, his-or-her* (for *he-or-she* French is no better off than English). Our view, though we admit it to be disputable, is clear—that *they, their, &c.*, should never be resorted to, as in the examples presently to be given they are. With a view to avoiding them, it should be observed that (a) the possessive of *one* (indefinite pronoun) is *one's*, and that of *one* (numeral pronoun) is either *his*, or *her*, or *its* (One does not forget *one's* own name: I saw one of them drop *his* cigar, *her* muff, or *its* leaves); (b) *he, his, him*, may generally be allowed to stand for the common gender. (c) Sentences may however easily be constructed (Neither John nor Mary knew *his* own mind) in which *his* is undeniably awkward. The solution is then what we so often recommend, to do a little exercise in paraphrase (*John and Mary were alike irresolute*, for instance). (d) Where legal precision is really necessary, *he or she* may be written in full. Corrections according to these rules will be appended in brackets to the examples.

*Anybody else* who *have* only *themselves* in view.—RICHARDSON. (has ... himself)

Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte, in novel-writing as in carrying *one's* head in *their* hand.—S. FERRIER. (one's ... one's)

The feelings of the *parent* upon committing the cherished object of *their* cares and affections to the stormy sea of life.—S. FERRIER. (his)

But he never allowed *one* to feel *their* own deficiencies.—S. FERRIER. (one's)

Which leaves *each* free to act according to *their* own feelings.—S. FERRIER. (his)

Suppose *each* of us *try our hands* at it.—S. FERRIER. (tries his hand ; or, if all of us *are women*, tries her hand)

*Everybody* is discontented with *their* lot in life.—BEACONSFIELD. (his)

4. Though nouns of multitude may be freely used with either a singular or a plural verb, and be referred to by pronouns of singular or plural meaning, they should not have both (except for special reasons and upon deliberation) in the same sentence.

*The public* is naturally much impressed by this evidence, and in considering it *do* not make the necessary allowances.—*T.*

The *committee adds* these words to *their* report.—*W. G.*

The Grand Opera Syndicate *has* also made an important addition to *their* German tenors.—*W. G.*

The only political *party who* could take office was *that* which . . . had consistently opposed the American war.—BAGEHOT.

As *the race* of man, after centuries of civilization, still *keeps* some traits of *their* barbarian fathers.—STEVENSON.

The battleship Kniaz Potemkin, of which the *crew is* said to have mutinied and murdered *their* officers.—*T.*

3. *Neither, either*, as pronouns, should always take a singular verb—a much neglected rule. So also *every*.

For two reasons, neither of which *are* noticed by Plato.—JOWETT.

. . . neither of which *are* very amiable motives.—THACKERAY.

I think almost *every one* of the Judges of the High Court *are* represented here.—LORD HALSBURY.

*Every* Warwick institution, from the corporation to the schools and the almshouses, *have* joined hands in patriotic fellow-working.—*S.*

6. For rhetorical reasons, a verb often precedes its subject ; but enthusiasm, even if appropriate, should not be allowed to override the concords.

And of this emotion *was* born all the *gods* of antiquity.—*D. T.*

There *seems* to be spread abroad certain *misconceptions*.—*T.*

But with these suggestions *are* joined some very good *exposition* of principles which should underlie education generally.—*S.*

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman has received a resolution, to which *is* appended the *names* of eight Liberal members.—*T.*

### THE INDEFINITE 'ONE'

This should never be mixed up with other pronouns. Its possessive, as we have said, is *one's*, not *his*, and *one* should be repeated, if necessary, not be replaced by *him*, &c. Those who doubt their ability to handle it skilfully under these restrictions should only use it where no repetition or substitute is needed. The older experimental usage, which has now been practically decided against, is shown in the Lowell example.

That inequality and incongruousness in his writing which makes *one* revise *his* judgement at every tenth page.—LOWELL.

He is a man who speaks with Bismarckian frankness, and who directly impresses *one* with the impression that *you* are speaking to a man and not to an incarnate bluebook.—*T.*

The merit of the book, and it is not a small one, is that it discusses every problem with fairness, with no perilous hankering after originality, and with a disposition to avail *oneself* of what has been done by *his* predecessors.—*T.*

If *one* has an opinion on any subject, it is of little use to read books or papers which tell *you* what you know already.—*T.*

... are all creations which make *one* laugh inwardly as *we* read.—HUTTON.

*One's*, on the other hand, is not the right possessive for the generic *man*; *man's* or *his* is required according to circumstances; *his* in the following example:

There is a natural desire in the mind of *man* to sit for *one's* picture.—HAZLITT.

### COMPARATIVES AND SUPERLATIVES

The chief point that requires mention is ill treatment of *the more*. In this phrase *the* is not the article, but an adverb, either relative or demonstrative. In *the more the merrier* it is first relative and then demonstrative: by-how-much we are more, by-so-much we shall be merrier. When the relative *the*

is used, it should always be answered regularly by, or itself answer, the demonstrative *the*. Attempts to vary the formula are generally unhappy; for instance,

... Bilton, who seemed to him, the more he knew him, extraordinarily efficient.—E. F. BENSON.

This should run, perhaps: *whose efficiency impressed him the more, the more he knew him*—though it must be confessed that the double form is nearly always uncomfortable if it has not the elbow-room of a whole sentence to itself.

The farther we advance into it, we see confusion more and more unfold itself into order.—CARLYLE.

Most readers will feel that this is an uncomfortable compromise between *The farther we advance the more do we see* and *As we advance we see confusion more and more unfold itself*. Similarly

The longer she countenanced his passion, her own heart would be more and more irretrievably engaged.—SMOLLETT.

But it is when the demonstrative is used alone with no corresponding relative clause—a use in itself quite legitimate—that real blunders occur. It seems sometimes to be thought that *the more* is merely a more imposing form of *more*, and is therefore better suited for a dignified or ambitious style; but it has in fact a perfectly definite meaning, or rather two; and there need never be any doubt whether *more* or *the more* is right. One of the meanings is a slight extension of the other. (1) The correlative meaning *by so much* may be kept, though the relative clause, instead of formally corresponding and containing *the* (meaning *by how much*) and a comparative, takes some possibly quite different shape. But it must still be clear from the context what the relative clause might be. Thus, 'We shall be a huge crowd'.—'Well, we shall be the merrier'. Or, 'If he raises his demands, I grant them the more willingly', i. e. The more he asks, the more willingly I give. This instance leads to the other possible meaning, which is wider. (2) The original meaning of the demonstrative *the*

is simply *by that* ; this in the complete double form, and often elsewhere, has the interpretation, limited to quantity, of *by so much*, or *in that proportion* ; but it may also mean *on that account*, when the relative clause is not present. Again, however, the context must answer plainly in some form the question *On what account?* Thus, He has done me many good turns ; but I do not like him any the better ; i. e., any better on that account ; i. e., on account of the good turns.

The function of *the*, then, is to tell us that there is, just before or after, an answer to one of the questions, *More by what amount?*, *More on what account?* If there is no such answer, we may be sure that the comparative has no right to its *the*. The following are wrong :—

Suppose in 1901 the mandate of 1900 had been 'verified', even Mr. Balfour would hardly have dared to introduce and carry the Education Act of 1902 . . . We have long been exhorted to 'verify our quotations' ; and the advice is not the less salutary in the case of mandates.—*W. G.*

The suggestion, as regarded Mr. Sowerby, was certainly true, and was not the less so as regarded some of Mr. Sowerby's friends.—*TROLLOPE*.

Yet as his criticism is more valuable than that of other men, so it is the more rarely met with.—*S.*

It may be added that *the* with a comparative is almost always wrong when a *than*-clause is appended ; it should be omitted in :—

I do not believe that the New Royalty productions would have pleased people any the more than at present by having money lavished upon scenery.—*W. G.*

But neither is that way open ; nor is it any the more open in the case of Canada than Australia.—*F. GREENWOOD*.

I am certain that I can *the more* acknowledge His unbounded love for all He has made, and our entire dependence on Him, *than I could* twenty years ago, when I attended church ten times where I now go once.—*D. T.*

In this, the answer to *More on what account?* is possibly implied in the last clause ; it would perhaps be, if clearly put, Because I go to church seldomer. The right form would be, *I can the more acknowledge . . . for going (or that I go) to church*

*only once where twenty years ago I went ten times.* Unless the *than*-clause is got rid of, we ought to have *more* without *the*.

The other points about comparatives and superlatives that call for mention are quite simple; they are illogicalities licensed by custom, but perhaps better avoided. Avoidance, however, that proclaims itself is not desirable; to set readers asking 'Who are you, pray, that the things everybody says are not good enough for you?' is bad policy. But if a way round presents itself that does not at once suggest an assumption of superiority, so much the better.

### 1. *More than I can help.*

Without thinking of the corresponding phrase in his native language more than he can help.—H. SWEET.

We don't haul guns through traffic more than we can help.—KIPLING. These really mean, of course, more than he (we) *cannot* help. To say that, however, is by this time impossible. *More than he need, if (when) he can help it, too much, unnecessarily*, and other substitutes, will sometimes do.

### 2. *Most of any* (singular).

She has the most comfortable repository of stupid friends to have recourse to of anybody I ever knew.—S. FERRIER.

And they had the readiest ear for a bold, honourable sentiment, of any class of men the world ever produced.—STEVENSON.

Latin at any rate should be an essential ingredient in culture as the best instrument of any language for clear and accurate expression of thought.—T.

The first chapter, which from the lessons it enforces is perhaps the most valuable of any in the present volume . . .—SIR G. T. GOLDIE.

Disraeli said that he had 'the largest parliamentary knowledge of any man he had met'.—BRYCE.

Though this is extremely common, there is seldom any objection to saying either *most of all* or *more than any*.

## RELATIVES

The points that demand attention are three: the distinction between *that* and *which*; the right and the wrong use of *and which*; the form *who(m) we believe is coming*.

For the first two of these, it is necessary to divide relative clauses into the defining and the non-defining.

A defining relative clause is one inserted to limit the sense that the antecedent would have by itself—to show, for instance, which out of many things included under a single name is to be spoken of. *Men wear dress-coats in the evening* may be too wide a statement; *men who dine out wear* &c. may meet the case; *who dine out* is a defining clause. *Nothing will ever convince me* may need the limitation of (*nothing*) *that you can say*; *that you can say* is a defining clause. Take, on the other hand: *The storm, which was very severe, nevertheless caused only one wreck*; it is clear here that the reader knows beforehand which storm is spoken of, and that the relative clause is not used to help him in identifying it, but for another purpose; its removal would not affect the truth of the main sentence; it is not a defining clause.

In some contexts there may be a doubt whether a clause defines or not. *At the first meeting which was held yesterday it was resolved . . .*: here, if the clause is defining, we are to understand that more than one meeting took place yesterday, and that at the first of these it was resolved; if it is non-defining, we are assumed to know or not to care whether there was one meeting yesterday or more, but to be curious about the date on which the meeting, sufficiently defined by *first*, took place. There are two methods, apart from what is not always a safe guide, the probable sense, by which it should be made clear whether a clause defines or not; but unfortunately bad writers neglect even the more generally observed of these—punctuation—; and very few writers consistently avail themselves of the other—the distinction between *that* and *which*. According to the best usage, our sentence, if the clause is to define, should be written: *At the first meeting that was held yesterday, it was resolved*. And if the clause is not to define, it should be: *At the first meeting, which was held yesterday, it was resolved*.

<sup>n</sup> The punctuation rule, generally observed, is that a defining

relative clause should never, and a non-defining clause should always, be parted from its antecedent by a comma. The other rule, generally neglected, is that (unless the antecedent is a person, when *who* is usual either way) *that* is the defining and *which* the non-defining relative. A few examples are added, showing the correct use of *who*, *that*, *which*, and the comma:—

*Defining*: The man who called yesterday left no address. The best novel that was ever written is *Tom Jones*. The ring (that) I lost was a gold one. The only objection (that) I can think of is this.

*Non-defining*: The man, who had behaved most rudely, then walked off. The best of all novels, which was not written by Fielding, is *Esmond*. The lost ring, which I valued highly, was a gold one. The only objection, which however we need not seriously consider, is this.

It will be observed that in two examples *that* is bracketed; whenever *that* is used as a defining relative in the objective case, it is legitimate also to omit it; and this peculiarity will assist those who are not clear about the distinction between defining and non-defining clauses; for a non-defining relative, whether *that* or *which* is used, can never be omitted; a clause, then, of which the relative can be omitted invariably defines; the converse, however, is not true, the relative being necessarily expressed when it is subject (*that* or *which*), and when it is governed by a preceding preposition (*which*). Thus: *The knowledge that (or which) I have is worth little; that or which can be omitted; the clause is accordingly known for a defining one. But: My knowledge, which I have not got from actual experience, is worth little; which cannot be omitted, and the clause is non-defining.*

### *That and Which*

The broad and essential difference between defining and non-defining clauses is now perhaps clear, and also the advantage of keeping *that* for the former, and *which* for the



latter, as the normal relative. It should be added (1) that *that* is still used also, and in certain forms without any touch of archaism, for a defining *who* or *whom*, as in *All the great men (that) I have ever met*; (2) that *which* must be used even in defining clauses if the relative has to be governed by a preposition, and the writer wishes that preposition to stand before the relative and not at the end of the clause; thus, *All the particulars that I know*, but *All the particulars of which I know*, or else *All the particulars (that) I know of*. As to choice between *of which I know* and *(that) I know of*, the former is more artificial and stiff, the latter more natural and vigorous; the natural form should be chosen whenever it is not obviously out of keeping with the tone of the context. (3) If the antecedent happens itself to be *that*, and the relative is to follow it closely, *that which* must be used for *that that*, unless some substitute, as *what*, is available. There are a few other and less important exceptions; but, with allowance made for these, there would be a considerable gain in clearness if it were recognized that *that* is to be used regularly, and only, in defining relative clauses. A few examples now follow of what we consider the wrong uses:—

The veteran critic who has long resided in Bruges that greatly prides herself on owning the marvellous ‘Shrine of St. Ursula’.—*W. G.*

In a word, the four volumes here noticed are typical examples of the valuable series to which they belong, that has aided greatly in promoting the cause of true art-education.—*W. G.*

I will not attempt to follow the various stages of the quarrel that threatened at one time to become slightly undignified.—*W. G.*

And with my own little stock of money besides, that Mrs. Hoggarty’s card-parties had lessened by a good five-and-twenty shillings, I calculated . . .—*THACKERAY.*

One cause which surely contributes to this effect has its root in early childhood.—*S.*

The first thing which the person who desires to be amiable must do is . . .—*S.*

He required all the solace which he could derive from literary success.—*MACAULAY.*

\* The only other biography which counts for much is . . .—*T.*

*And which*

This combination is well known as one that, wrongly used, often betrays a writer's grammatical incompetence. The simple rule usually given—Never use *and which* except after a *which* clause—is of some use; it will save a tiro from such flagrant errors as are shown in:—

Such a person may reside there with absolute safety, unless it becomes the object of the Government to secure his person; and which purpose, even then, might be disappointed by early intelligence.—SCOTT.

That, remembering the action of the House of Lords in rejecting the Home Rule (Ireland) Bill, 1893, and which rejection was subsequently ratified by the emphatic verdict of the British electorate, this House deprecates . . .—*House of Commons Amendment*.

Was there no meaning in the live repose of the valley behind the mill, and which Homer or Shakespeare could not re-form for me in words?—EMERSON.

But this is a mere rule of thumb, and, like most such rules, forbids many legitimate and encourages many illegitimate forms. The true rule is that *and* (or *but*) *which* should be used to couple such expressions, and such only, as perform the same function; whether the two expressions are both relative clauses is not essential; but that both should be defining, or else both non-defining, is essential. The normal correct form is seen in *The geometry that (or which) I learnt first, and that (or which) will abide in my memory longest, is Euclid's; This proposition, which is repugnant to all my better feelings, and which nothing shall induce me to accept, hails from Birmingham.*

But there is no objection to:—

- It is a compliment due, and which I willingly pay, to those who administer our affairs.—BURKE.

It may seem strange that this important place should not have been conferred on Vaca de Castro, already on the spot, and who had shown himself so well qualified to fill it.—PRESCOTT.

The Burke has two defining expressions, the Prescott two non-defining, the second part only, in each, being a relative clause. And on the other hand there is every objection to:—

They propose that the buildings shall belong . . . to the communes in which they stand, and which, it is hoped, will not permit their desecration.—*S.*

In the best French which he could muster, and which in sooth was of a very ungrammatical sort . . .—THACKERAY.

In both of these the first *which*-clause is obviously defining, and the second non-defining; they should not be coupled; the *and* should be omitted. The awkwardness of omitting it is no longer felt if we write (or better omit) *that* for the first *which* in both sentences, and place *in* after *stand* in the first; that is to say, if we use the correct defining relative, and do not allow ourselves to be bullied by the superstitious prejudice, first set up in the seventeenth century, but never victorious in conversation over the natural idiom, against placing a preposition at the end of a sentence or clause. And it may be said generally that those who use *that* in the right places, and appreciate the difference between the defining and the non-defining clause, will have no difficulty with *and which*.

*Who(m) we believe is coming*

In all the following examples, *who* should be used, not *whom*; this is plain enough to require no showing; but the blunder is so common that it is well to illustrate liberally. And, though *who* is correct, there is no denying that it is uncomfortable. Those who neither wish to display their knowledge of grammar by using *who*, nor are content to blunder with *whom*, will put the thing some other way; the type *whom she supposed it to be* is often possible; *that* for *who(m)* will solve some difficulties; or again *who*, as *he now began to perceive, was*.

Instinctively apprehensive of her father, whom she supposed it was, she stopped in the dark.—DICKENS.

That peculiar air of contempt commonly displayed by insolent menials to those whom they imagine are poor.—CORELLI.

It is only those converted by the Gospel whom we pretend are influenced by it.—*D. T.*

We found those whom we feared might be interested to withhold the settlement alert and prompt to assist us.—GALT.

Mr. Dombey, whom he now began to perceive was as far beyond human recall.—DICKENS.

Those whom it was originally pronounced would be allowed to go.—S.

But this looks as if he has included the original 30,000 men whom he desires 'should be in the country now'.—T.

We feed children whom we think are hungry.—T.

The only gentlemen holding this office in the island, whom, he felt sure, would work for the spiritual good of the parish.—G. A.

### PARTICIPLE AND GERUND

The participle is an adjective, and should be in agreement with a noun or pronoun; the gerund is a noun, of which it should be possible to say clearly whether, and why, it is in the subjective, objective, or possessive case, as we can of other nouns. That the distinction is often obscured, partly in consequence of the history of the language, will be clear from one or two facts and examples.

1. *The man is building* contains what we should all now call, whether it is so or not historically, a participle or verbal adjective: *the house is building* (older but still living and correct English for *the house is being built*) contains a gerund or verbal noun, once governed by a now lost preposition.

2. In *He stopped, laughing* we have a participle; in *He stopped laughing*, a gerund governed directly by the verb; in *He burst out laughing*, a gerund governed by a vanished preposition.

3. Present usage does not bear out the definite modern ideas of the distinction between participle and gerund as respectively adjective and noun. So long as that usage continues, there are various degrees of ambiguity, illustrated by the three following examples. It would be impossible to say, whatever the context, whether the writer of the first intended a gerund or a participle. In the second, a previous sentence would probably have decided the question. In the third, though grammar (again as modified by present usage)

leaves the question open, the meaning of the sentence is practically decisive by itself.

Can he conceive *Matthew Arnold* *permitting* such a book to be written and published about himself?—*T.*

And no doubt that end will be secured by *the Commission sitting* in Paris.—*T.*

\* Those who have least of them [the virtues] know very well how much they are concerned in *other people having* them.—MORLEY.

In the second of these, if *sitting* is a participle, the meaning is that the end will be secured by the Commission, which is described by way of identification, as the one sitting in Paris. If *sitting* is gerund, the end will be secured by the wise choice of Paris and not another place for its scene. If *Commission's* were written, there could be no doubt the latter was the meaning. With *Commission*, there is, by present usage, absolutely no means of deciding between the two meanings apart from possible light in the context. In the third, common sense is able to tell us, though grammar gives the question up, that what is interesting is not the other people who have them, but the question whether other people have them.

### PARTICIPLES

The unattached or wrongly attached participle is one of the blunders most common with illiterate or careless writers. But there are degrees of heinousness in the offence; our examples are arranged from 1. to 7. in these degrees, starting with perfect innocence.

1. Participles that have passed into prepositions, conjunctions, or members of adverbial phrases.

*Considering* the circumstances, *you* may go.

*Seeing* that it was involuntary, *he* can hardly be blamed.

Roughly *speaking*, all *men* are liars.

*Looking at* it in a shortened perspective of time, those *years* of transition have the quality of a single consecutive occurrence.—H. G. WELLS.

The *Bill* . . . will bring about, *assuming* that it meets with good fortune in . . . its passage through Parliament, a very useful reform.—*T.*

Regarded as participles, these are incorrect. It is not *you* that consider, but *I*; not *he* that sees, but *we*; not *men* that roughly speak, but the moralist; not *years* that look, but philosophic historians; not *the Bill* that assumes, but the newspaper prophet. The development into prepositions, &c., is a natural one, however; the only question about any particular word of the kind is whether the vox populi has yet declared for it; when it has, there is no more to be said; but when it has not, the process should be resisted as long as possible, writers acting as a suspensive House of Lords. *Owing to* has become a mere preposition; but a warning may be inserted here against treating the exactly similar *due to* in the same way; *due* must be in correct agreement with a noun; read *owing* in:—

During his political career at the Cape he has been characterised as an opportunist, *due to* the fact that he has in turn . . .—*W. G.*

2. Participles half justified by attachment to a pronoun implied in *my, your, his, their*, but perhaps better avoided.

*Having* thus run through the causes of the sublime with reference to all the senses, *my* first observation will be found . . . true.—BURKE.

*Being* much interested in the correspondence bearing on the question 'Do we believe?', the first difficulty arising in *my* mind is . . .—*D. T.*

*My* farm consisted of about twenty acres of excellent land, *having given* a hundred pounds for my predecessor's good will.—GOLDSMITH.

3. Mere unattached participles for which nothing can be said, except that they are sometimes inoffensive if the word to be supplied is very vague.

*Doubling* the point, and *running* along the southern shore of the little peninsula, the scene changes.—F. M. CRAWFORD.

The most trying . . . period was this one of enforced idleness *waiting* for the day of entry.—*T.*

*Having acquired* so many tropical colonies there is the undoubted duty attached to such possession of . . .—*T.*

4. An unwary writer sometimes attaches a participle to the subject of a previous sentence, assuming that it will be the subject of the new sentence also, and then finds (or rather

leaves the question open, the meaning of the sentence is practically decisive by itself.

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*Looking at* it in a shortened perspective of time, those *years* of transition have the quality of a single consecutive occurrence.—H. G. WELLS.

The *Bill* . . . will bring about, *assuming* that it meets with good fortune in . . . its passage through Parliament, a very useful reform.—*T.*

Regarded as participles, these are incorrect. It is not *you* that consider, but *I*; not *he* that sees, but *we*; not *men* that roughly speak, but the moralist; not *years* that look, but philosophic historians; not *the Bill* that assumes, but the newspaper prophet. The development into prepositions, &c., is a natural one, however; the only question about any particular word of the kind is whether the vox populi has yet declared for it; when it has, there is no more to be said; but when it has not, the process should be resisted as long as possible, writers acting as a suspensive House of Lords. *Owing to* has become a mere preposition; but a warning may be inserted here against treating the exactly similar *due to* in the same way; *due* must be in correct agreement with a noun; read *owing* in:—

During his political career at the Cape he has been characterised as an opportunist, *due* to the fact that he has in turn . . . —*W. G.*

2. Participles half justified by attachment to a pronoun implied in *my, your, his, their*, but perhaps better avoided.

*Having* thus run through the causes of the sublime with reference to all the senses, *my* first observation will be found . . . true.—BURKE.

*Being* much interested in the correspondence bearing on the question 'Do we believe?', the first difficulty arising in *my* mind is . . . —*D. T.*

*My* farm consisted of about twenty acres of excellent land, *having* given a hundred pounds for my predecessor's good will.—GOLDSMITH.

3. Mere unattached participles for which nothing can be said, except that they are sometimes inoffensive if the word to be supplied is very vague.

*Doubling* the point, and *running* along the southern shore of the little peninsula, the scene changes.—F. M. CRAWFORD.

The most trying . . . period was this one of enforced idleness *waiting* for the day of entry.—*T.*

*Having* acquired so many tropical colonies there is the undoubted duty attached to such possession of . . . —*T.*

4. An unwary writer sometimes attaches a participle to the subject of a previous sentence, assuming that it will be the subject of the new sentence also, and then finds (or rather



is not awake enough to find) himself mistaken. It is important for the tiro to realize that he has not satisfied the elementary requirements of grammar until he has attached the participle to a noun in the same sentence as itself, not in another. He must also remember that, for instance, *I went and he came*, though often spoken of loosely as a sentence, is in fact two.

*The lovers sought a shelter, and, mutually charmed with each other, time flew for a while on downy pinions.*—S. FERRIER.

A molecular *change* is propagated to the muscles by which the body is retracted, and *causing* them to contract, *the act* of retraction is brought about.—HUXLEY.

*Miss Pinkerton . . . in vain . . . tried to overawe her. Attempting* once to scold her in public, *Rebecca* hit upon the . . . plan of answering her in French, which quite routed the old woman.—THACKERAY.

Alvarado, roused by the noise of the attack on this quarter, hastened to the support of his officer, when *Almagro*, seizing the occasion, pushed across the bridge, dispersed the small body left to defend it, and, *falling* on Alvarado's rear, *that general* saw himself hemmed in.—PRESCOTT.

*Murtagh . . . went to the door, and shouting* into the passage something in Irish, *the room* was instantly filled with bog-trotters.—BORROW.

And then *I* resolved to speak plainly to Anne. But not *being* ready with my words, *she* got in first.—CROCKETT.

5. A more obvious trap, and consequently less fatal, is a change from the active construction that may have been intended to a passive, without corresponding alterations. If the two writers next quoted had used *we must admit* instead of *it must be admitted*, *a policy that they put forward* instead of *a policy put forward*, the participles *hesitating* and *believing* would have had owners.

While *hesitating* to accept this terrible indictment of French infancy, *it must be admitted* that French literature . . . is a grown-up literature.—S.

He and those with whom he acted were responsible for the policy promulgated—*a policy* put forward in all seriousness and honesty *believing* it to be essential to . . .—T.

6. Participles that seem to belong to a noun, but do not.

Letters on the constant stopping of omnibuses, thus *causing* considerable suffering to the horses.

Does *causing* agree with *letters*? Then the letters annoy the

horses. With *stopping*? Then stopping causes suffering by stopping (*thus*). With *omnibuses*? The horses possibly blame those innocents, but we can hardly suppose a human being, even the writer of the sentence, so illogical. The word *thus*, however, is often considered to have a kind of dispensing power, freeing its participle from all obligations; so:

The Prince was, by the special command of his Majesty the Emperor, made the guardian of H. I. H. the Crown Prince, *thus necessitating* the Prince's constant presence in the capital of Japan.—T.

7. Really bad unattached or wrongly attached participles. The reader will generally find no difficulty in seeing what has led to the blunder, and if he will take the trouble to do this, will be less likely to make similar blunders himself.

And then *stooping* to take up the key to let *myself* into the garden, *he* started and looked as if he heard somebody near the door.—RICHARDSON.

Sir—*Having read* with much interest the letters re 'Believe only' . . . perhaps some of your readers might be interested to know the following texts which have led some great men to 'believe only'.—D. T.

*Being pushed* unceremoniously to one side—which was precisely what I wished—he usurped my place.—C. BRONTË.

The higher forms of speech acquire a secondary strength from association. *Having*, in actual life, habitually *heard* them in connexion with mental impressions, and *having been accustomed* to meet with them in the most powerful writing, they come to have in themselves a species of force.—SPENCER.

#### 8. Participle or adjective with demonstrative and noun.

Of the forms, *persons interested*, *the persons interested*, *those interested*, *those who are interested*, one or another may better suit a particular phrase or context; *those interested* is the least to be recommended, especially with an active participle or adjective. But the form *those persons interested* is a hybrid, and is very seldom used by any good writer, though it is becoming common in inferior work. The first two examples, of the form *those interested*, will pass, though *those who were concerned*, *all who drive*, would be better. In the others *that* and *those* should be either replaced by *the* or (sometimes) simply omitted.

The idea of a shortage had hardly entered the heads even of *those* most immediately *concerned*.—*T.*

They are the terror of all *those driving* or riding spirited horses.—*T.*

At every time and in every place throughout *that* very limited *portion* of time and space *open* to human observation.—BALFOUR.

*That part* of the regular army *quartered* at home should be grouped by divisions.—*T.*

It is not likely that General Kuropatkine has amassed *those reserves* of military stores and supplies plainly *required* by the circumstances of his situation.—*T.*

The insurrection had been general throughout the country, at least *that portion* of it *occupied* by the Spaniards.—PRESCOTT.

My amendment would be that *that part* of the report *dealing* with the dividend on the 'A' shares . . . be not adopted.—Company report.

A struggle . . . which our nation must be prepared to face in the last resort, or else give way to *those countries* not *afraid* to accept the responsibilities and sacrifices inseparable from Empire.—*T.*

To *those Colonies* *unable* to concur with these suggestions a warning should be addressed.—*T.*

Parental rights would be satisfied by frankly recognising the right of denominations to provide schools for *those children of parents who desired such schools*.—BISHOP OF MANCHESTER.

9. The absolute construction is not much to be recommended, having generally an alien air in English; but it is sometimes useful. It must be observed, first, that the case used should now invariably be the subjective, though it was otherwise in old English. Secondly, it is very seldom advisable to make an absolute construction and insert a pronoun for the purpose when the participle might simply be attached in ordinary agreement to a noun already to hand. Thirdly, it is very bad to use the construction, but omit to give the participle a noun or pronoun to itself. These three transgressions will be illustrated, in the same order, by the next three examples. But many of the wrong sentences in 4. above may be regarded as absolute constructions with the subject omitted.

I, with whom that Impulse was . . . the most maddening of masters (*him* before me always excepted) . . . —C. BRONTË.

'Special' is a much overworked word, *it* being loosely used to mean great in degree, also peculiar in kind.—R. G. WHITE.

This is said now because, *having been said* before, I have been judged as if I had . . .—R. G. WHITE.

### THE GERUND

The practice (perhaps originally suggested by the harmless and unavoidable ambiguity after such verbs as *conceive*) of not considering whether a form in *-ing* is, in a particular sentence, participle or gerund, but constructing it as a participle though the sense requires a gerund, is much on the increase, and much to be regretted. The explanation of its popularity is to be looked for in the fatal facility that it gives to a hasty or slovenly writer; it permits the use of certain long and involved expressions, equivalent to a noun, that are impossible with the true gerund construction. The distinguishing mark of the latter is that what may be called the subject of the gerund (*me* or *my*, *Jones* or *Jones's*, in *he consents to me* or *my*, *Jones* or *Jones's*, *going*) is, if expressed, in the possessive, not the subjective or objective case. But when this subject is itself a number of words, the possessive sign cannot, except rarely, be used. Thus we can say *The explanation of his failing to please* was so-and-so; *his*, not *him*; for *his* we can substitute *the Duke's*, or, by using a compound possessive, *the Duke of Clarence's*; but we cannot go so far as to write *The explanation of a man who had so often pleased the populace's failing this time to please*. Nor, on the other hand, can we endure the pedantic effect of *The explanation of a man's who had so often pleased the populace failing* &c. We accordingly, to save the trouble of recasting (*He had often pleased the populace; the explanation of his failing this time was*—or any of a dozen other ways), sacrifice grammar, treat *failing* as though it were a participle, and write *The explanation of a man who had so often pleased the populace failing this time to please* was so-and-so.

The first and least objection to this is that it is logically and

grammatically indefensible. The only plausible defence—that *a man failing* is in sense a compound abstract noun, but in grammar a simple concrete noun with a participle in agreement, and that it thus corresponds exactly to the Latin *occisus Caesar*, the death of Caesar—will not bear examination. *Occisus Caesar effecit ut* = the death of Caesar had the result that; *occisi Caesares effecerunt ut* = the death(s) of the Caesars had the result that; observe that the verb's number changes. But in English, the Gentlemen being beaten *does* not prove that the Players were a strong eleven (not *do not*); you saying you are sorry quite *alters* the matter (not *alter*). This disposes of the Latin parallel; the fact is that *being beaten*, *saying*, are singular nouns, correctly followed by singular verbs, but that the correct *Gentlemen's*, *your*, have been changed to *Gentlemen*, *you*, owing to the unfortunate identity in form between gerund and participle.

The second and more important objection is the ambiguity that sometimes results; and, short of actual ambiguity, many sentences occur in which a reader is tempted to suppose that the construction is complete before it is, has to revise his manner of taking it, and is naturally angry; laying false scent of this kind is a serious literary offence. An example or two will illustrate these dangers.

Mr. Carter, solicitor, spoke to *Burt* having consulted him regarding the case.—*W. G.*

There is no possibility of *the dissolution of the legislative union becoming* a vital question.—*S.*

We have to account for *the collision of two great fleets, so equal in material strength that the issue was thought doubtful by many careful statisticians, ending* in the total destruction of one of them and in the immunity of the other from damage greater than might well be incurred in a mere skirmish.—*T.*

Is the question why the fleets met, or why the meeting resulted in a particular way?

The officers of the 'Amsterdam' declare that the collision was owing to *the signalling instructions laid down by the international regulations*

*for use by ships at anchor in a fog not having been properly followed.*—W. G.

... capital seeking employment in foreign protected countries, in consequence of *manufacturing business in many branches in which it might be employed at home being rendered* unprofitable by our system of free trade.—LORD GOSCHEN.

So far from *the relief given to agriculture by the State paying one-half of the rates being* inequitable, it is but a bare act of justice.—S.

Here there are wheels within wheels, one false gerund construction inside another.

The third and greatest, but unfortunately least tangible objection to the use of a hybrid gerund and participle is the encouragement that it gives to the modern vice of complexity, length, and nouniness, in expression; the prevalence of phrases like *in the event of for if, on the occasion of for when*, great favourites with newspaper writers, accounts for a great deal of it; and it may almost be said that any one's tendency to use the hybrid is in inverse ratio to his skill and literary perception.

In the event of the passage being found, he will esteem it a favour . . .

The retirement of Judge Stonor was made the subject of special reference yesterday on the occasion of Sir W. L. Selfe, his successor, taking his seat in Marylebone County Court.—T.

If some means could be devised for . . . insisting upon many English guardians of the poor making themselves more acquainted . . .—T.

The general effect of his words was to show the absurdity of the Secretary of State for War, and our military authorities generally, denouncing the Militia as useless or redundant.—S.

... The habit, we mean, of those who control banks borrowing from them on favourable terms.—N.

- There being shown to be something radically defective in the management of the Bank led to the appointment of a Committee.—H. D. MACLEOD.

From it was distilled an evil-smelling hair-wash, which Mrs. Gilbert insisted on being used, much to the detriment of their golden hair.—W. G.

It should be added that to use the objective, or subjective case of a personal pronoun instead of the possessive adjective or case is still a vulgarity, though one that is gaining ground.

owing to the general slovenliness from which the gerund construction suffers. All the following should be corrected :—

But when it comes to *us* following his life and example.—*D. T.*

Surely if the Government . . . hold that the Militia could have supplied drafts for the Regulars, they should have insisted on *it* supplying those drafts.—*S.*

To avoid *them* being stoned by the mob . . . they are now housed on the ships.—*W. G.*

Frederick had already accepted the crown, lest James should object to *him* doing so.—*T.*

**Subject of gerund (or infinitive)—when to be expressed.**

Another matter, admitting of less difference of opinion than that already discussed, but also requiring caution, is the distinction between gerunds (and infinitives) of which the subject must be expressed and those with which it may or ought to be omitted.

Roughly, the subject of the gerund (or infinitive) should be expressed if it is different from, and omitted if it is the same as, the subject of the sentence. To omit it when different is positively wrong, and may produce actual ambiguity or worse, though sometimes there is only a slipshod effect; to insert it when the same is generally clumsy.

No one would say 'I succeeded to his property upon dying', because, *I* being the subject of the sentence, *my* is naturally suggested instead of the necessary *his* as subject of the gerund; the *his* must be inserted before *dying*, even though the nature of the case obviates ambiguity.

The insertion of superfluous subjects is much less common than the omission of necessary ones; but some examples follow. The first two show a rare and precious variety; the third has no apparent justification; for the last it may be said that the unusual *his* has the same effect as the insertion of the parenthetic words *as he actually does* after *limiting* would have had.

The sacred oasis, to which his captors had been careful to draw near in the event of *they themselves* being in danger.—*W. G.*

You took food to him, but instead of *he reaching* out his hand and taking it, he kept asking for food.—*D. T.*

Harsh facts: sure as she was of *her never losing* her filial hold of the beloved.—*MEREDITH.*

I have said that Mr. Chamberlain has no warrant for *his limiting* the phrase . . . to the competitive manufacture of goods.—*LORD GOSCHEN.*

The more usual mistake of omitting the subject, though it seldom makes a sentence ambiguous enough to deceive, easily makes it ambiguous enough to amuse the reader at wrong moments, or gives an impression of amateurish work. Mistakes are mended, sometimes by inserting the subject of the gerund (or infinitive), sometimes by changing the main subject to make it the same as that of the gerund, sometimes by other recasting.

. . . an excellent arrangement for a breeching, which, when released, remains with the carriage, so that lead or centre horses can be put in the wheel *without having* to affix a new breeching.—*T.*

I cultivated a passionless and cold exterior, for I discovered that *by assuming* such a character, certain otherwise crafty persons would talk more readily before me.—*CORELLI.*

I am sensible that *by conniving* at it it will take too deep root ever to be eradicated.—*T.*

But the commercial interests of both Great Britain and the United States were too closely affected by the terms of the Russo-Chinese agreement *to let* it pass unnoticed.—*T.*

One cannot do good to a man whose mouth has been gagged *in order not to hear* what he desires for his welfare.—*T.*

*In order to obtain* peace, ordinary battles followed by ordinary victories and ordinary results will only lead to a useless prolongation of the struggle.—*T.*

## SHALL AND WILL

\* In this section, Sh. will be used as short for shall-or-should, and W. for will-or-would.

The idiomatic use of these forms is attended with great difficulties: for most purposes, but not for all, the first person takes either Sh. where the others take W., or W. where they take Sh.; Sh. and W. are sometimes colourless auxiliaries providing a future tense and conditionals, sometimes they



combine with this function a tinge of their own original force, and sometimes they have that original force and no reference to the future; questions differ in some respects from the corresponding statements; and finally, usage is not yet completely settled.

### Rule 1. The Plain Future

In plain prophecies or statements about the future, in the main sentence of plain conditionals, and in plain questions except those in the second person, use *Sh.* in the first person, *W.* in the others.

I shall, you *or* he will, die. Will he, shall I, like it? Should we, would he, have missed you?

The word *plain* is meant to imply that the sentence is not coloured by the speaker's intention as under Rule 2, but is a mere neutral prophecy or, if it is a question, demand for information.

(a) Second-person plain questions do not regularly follow the rule; they are usually attracted to the expected answer, which is generally in another person, and have the *Sh.* or *W.* that that requires. Thus: *Shall you be there?* (answer, *Yes, I shall*, or *No, I shall not*); *Will you ever understand me?* (answer, given in such rhetorical questions by the asker himself if at all, *No, you will not*); *Would you mind passing the salt?* (answer, *Of course you would not*). But the *W.* form is often used side by side with the other, as *Should* or *Would you like a bathe?*, and the distinction of meaning neglected.

(b) When plain-future sentences are made, by being reported or otherwise, into subordinate clauses, the change of person that sometimes occurs (*I was there*, reported, becomes *He said he was there*) leads to confusion with *Sh.* and *W.* The present not very satisfactory usage, is in favour of changing the *Sh.* or *W.* with the change of person (*I shall never succeed*; *you said you would never succeed*). The older and clearer usage retains the *Sh.* or *W.* in spite of the changed person (*You said you*

should *never succeed*); and this is often done still where the change of Sh. or W. would risk ambiguity (*You said you should never do it*, i.e. succeed, because *would never do it* might also represent a promise never to do it instead of a prophecy of inability). But, though the old-fashioned method is theoretically preferable, it is losing ground, and the safest rule is that plain-future sentences, when reported, have nearly always Sh. in first person, and usually W. elsewhere, but occasionally retain the Sh. or W. of direct speech to avoid ambiguity.

### Rule 2. The Coloured Future

In future and conditional statements in which Sh. or W. serve by themselves to show that the speaker's will decides or would decide the result, use W. in first, Sh. in second and third persons.

I will tell you. You shall repent it. He shall not have any. We would go if we could. You should do it if we could make you. They should have had it if they had asked.

The words *by themselves* exclude the incorrect form *I would wish to say*, which should be either *I would say* under the present rule, or *I should wish to say* under Rule 1; the still commoner *I would like to know* is to be corrected similarly.

There are no questions under Rule 2 except those (*shall I tell you?*) that belong more properly under Rule 3.

(a) Coloured-future sentences, when subordinated in reporting or otherwise, retain invariably the Sh. or W. shown in the direct form, unaffected by any change of person (*You, he, shall repent it; you said I, he, should repent it. I will apologize; you said you, I said I, would apologize*); in this they are unlike the plain-future sentences, as explained above.

### Rule 3. Command and Wish

When Sh. retains its full sense of command, obligation, or duty, and W. its full sense of wish or consent, each is used in

all persons, or in those of them in which the sense can be required, alike in statements and questions.

#### Uses applicable to all persons

You should not say such things. Why should you suspect me? I asked him to, but he would not. He will bite his nails, whatever I say. He will sometimes talk for an hour on end. When I objected, I would be told to mind my own business.

*He will sometimes talk &c.*, the 'habitual' use, was originally the statement of his will inferred from his past conduct; *I would be told &c.* is a further extension.

#### Uses applicable to some persons only

Thou shalt not steal (not in first). Shall I open the door? (not in second). Will you come with me? (not in first). I would I were dead (not in second or third).

### Rule 4. Protasis and Indefinite Clause

In the protasis or *if*-clause of conditional sentences, and in indefinite clauses of similar character, *Sh.* may be used with all persons. Generally neither *Sh.* nor *W.* is used. *W.* should only be used if the full meaning of wish or consent is intended, and then with all persons.

If, when, the last trump shall sound (or more usually *sounds*; not *will sound*, except in the special compressed sense *if it is true that it will sound*). Whoever shall compare (or more usually *compares*). *Whoever will compare* is also possible, but only with the sense *whoever consents*, or *takes the trouble*, to compare).

A warning must be added that there are some exceptional uses that it has not been possible to treat in the available space. A few examples correct and incorrect are added, with references to the number of the rule that they keep or break.

#### Correct

I would (2) choose my friends among the wise, and my wife among the virtuous; and therefore should (1) be in no danger from treachery or

unkindness. My children should (2) by my care be learned and pious, and would (1) repay to my age what their childhood had received.—JOHNSON.

John, why should (3) you waste yourself upon those ugly giggling girls? —R. G. WHITE.

What should (1a) you say to a cup of tea?

You, my dear, believe you shall (1 b, old use) be unhappy, if you have Mr. Solmes: your parents think the contrary; and that you will (1 b) be undoubtedly so, were you to have Mr. Lovelace.—RICHARDSON.

People imagine they should (1 b, old use) be happy in circumstances which they would (1) find insupportably burthensome in less than a week.—COWPER.

Shaftesbury's anger vented itself in threats that the advisers of this dissolution should (2 b) pay for it with their heads.—J. R. GREEN.

And shall (3) Trelawny die?

Japan will (1) adhere to her pledge of neutrality unless Russia shall (4) first violate hers.—T.

If he should (4) come, you would (1) learn how the matter stands.

If we would (4;=consented to) believe, we might move mountains.

Nothing can now prevent it from continuing to distil upwards until there shall (4) be no member of the legislature who . . .—HUXLEY.

### Incorrect

We would (1) thus get at once the thing wanted.—*Speaker*.

Among these . . . I would (1) be inclined to place those who acquiesce in the phenomenalism of Mr. Herbert Spencer.—D. T.

But give your definition of romance. I would (1) like to hear it.—F. M. CRAWFORD.

What would (1) we be without our appetites?—S. FERRIER.

Will (3) I set the dog at him?

It came with a strange stunning effect upon us all—the consciousness that never again would (1 b) we hear the grind of those positive boot-heels on the gravel.—CROCKETT.

I think that if the matter were handed over to . . . we would (1 b) within a twelvemonth have exactly such a network of rifle clubs.—CONAN DOYLE.

We must ask ourselves what victory will cost the Russian people when at length it will (4) become possible to conclude the peace so ardently desired.—T.

I cannot let the moment pass at which I would (1) have been enjoying a visit to you . . .—GLADSTONE.

## THE INFINITIVE

## 1. Some Illegitimate Infinitives

*Claim* is not followed by an infinitive except when the subject of *claim* is also that of the infinitive. Thus, *I claim to be honest*, but not *I claim this to be honest*. The latter use is now becoming very common, and calls for strong protest. The corresponding passive use is equally wrong. The same applies to *pretend*.

Usage, therefore, is not, as it is often claimed to be, the absolute law of language.—R. G. WHITE.

The gun which made its first public appearance on Saturday is claimed to be the most serviceable weapon of its kind in use in any army.—*T*.

The constant failure to live up to what we claim to be our most serious convictions proves that we do not hold them at all.—*D. T*.

The anonymous and masked delators whose creation the Opposition pretends to be an abuse of power on the part of M. Combes.—*T*.

*Possible* and *probable* are not to be completed by an infinitive. For *are possible to read can*; and for *probable read likely*.

But no such questions are possible, as it seems to me, to arise between your nation and ours.—CHOATE.

Should Germany meditate anything of the kind it would look uncommonly like a deliberate provocation of France, and for that reason it seems scarcely probable to be borne out by events.—*T*.

*Prefer* has two constructions: I prefer life (or living) *to* death (or dying), and I prefer to do this *rather than* that. The infinitive construction must not be used without *rather* (unless, of course, the second alternative is suppressed altogether).

Other things being equal, I should prefer to marry a rich man than a poor one.—E. F. BENSON.

The following infinitives are perhaps by false analogy from those that might follow *forbade*, *seen*, *ask*. It may be noticed generally that slovenly and hurried writers find the infinitive a great resource.

Marshal Oyama strictly *prohibited* his troops *to take* quarter within the walls.—*T*.

The Chinese held a chou-chou, during which the devil was exorcised and duly *witnessed* by several believers *to take* his flight in divers guises.—*T*.

Third, they might *demand* from Germany, all flushed as she was with military pride, *to tell* us plainly whether . . .—MORLEY.

## 2. The Split Infinitive

The whole point was learnedly and exhaustively discussed in the *American Journal of Philology* close upon a quarter of a century ago; and a list of examples of this idiom, accompanied by full references, was given, ranging from Wycliffe to Sir Leslie Stephen. That list included Lord Berners, Tyndale, Dr. John Donne, Sir Thomas Browne, Pepys, Bentley, Defoe, Burke, Johnson, Southey, Coleridge, Lamb, Wordsworth, Macaulay, De Quincey, Ruskin, Herbert Spencer, Charles Reade, Matthew Arnold, Samuel Wilberforce, and W. H. Mallock.

The above extract is from the *Westminster Gazette*, whose authority may no doubt be accepted for the facts. It does not follow that the split infinitive is to be blessed altogether; but one objection to it, usually considered weighty, is removed. The use, however, became much more common in the nineteenth century; and it is undoubtedly desirable that it should be less common than it is in many (mostly inferior) writers. Perhaps it may be laid down that the infinitive should never be split until it has been decided that other positions for the intruded word or phrase are less satisfactory than that between *to* and its verb, but that no one should give way to superstitious reverence for an absolute rule. There is no sufficient reason for splitting in the examples now to follow; the first is from a schoolboy's essay who had probably never heard, and had better have heard, of the split infinitive.

And with this picture let me close my attempt to, by showing the character of the old-time sailors, bring home to the minds of all who may read this, that . . .

The time has come to once again voice the general discontent.—*T.*

It should be authorized to immediately put in hand such work.—*T.*

Keep competition with you unless you wish to once more see a similar state of things.—*G. E. P.*

But in the two following sentences, of which we give all the arrangements that occur to us, the splitting position for the adverb seems the most natural:—

Our object is further to cement trade relations. (often ambiguous)

Our object is to further cement trade relations.

Our object is to cement further trade relations. (unbearable, apart from the accidental ambiguity)

Our object is to cement trade relations further. (flabby)

I wish partly to exclude American tinplate.

I wish to partly exclude American tinplate.

I wish to exclude partly American tinplate.

I wish to exclude American tinplate partly.

There are sentences, it is clear, in which the split position is the most precise as well as the only convenient form of expression.

The desperate shifts sometimes resorted to by way of keeping the infinitive intact suggest that non-splitting is with many writers a matter of faith, not of perception; and some examples will show how much worse is clumsy avoidance than the offence avoided:—

What alternative can be found which the Pope has not condemned, and which will make it possible to organize legally public worship?—*S.*

Mr. Williamson, unable to disprove at least seven charges of bribery by persons in the category of agents, decides *further not to contest* the matter. —*W. G.* (the meaning is *decides against further contesting*, not *decides further against contesting*)

Who was there fifty years ago to consider seriously the subject?—*W. G.*

Some writers seem to think that *to be, have, fatally wounded* is open to the same objection as *to fatally wound*; this is not so; but the following arrangements can hardly be accounted for except on that assumption:

But if that becomes the impression on the public mind the cause which it is sought to advance cannot fail seriously to be damaged.—*W. G.*

The odd thing is that the two letters, one of which is supposed completely to have answered the other, were on entirely different points.—*W. G.*

### 3. The Infinitive in Compound Passives

Corresponding to the active construction '... have attempted to justify this step', we get two passive constructions: (1) 'This step has been attempted to be justified', (2) 'It has been attempted to justify this step'. Of these (1), although licensed

by usage, is an incorrect and slovenly makeshift: 'this step' is not the object of 'have attempted', and cannot be the subject of the corresponding passive. The true object of 'have attempted' is the whole phrase 'to justify this step', which in (2) rightly appears as the subject, in apposition to an introductory 'it'. Type (2) is often clumsy, as in the first of the examples, but not worse.

The cutting down of 'saying lessons', by which it had been attempted by the founders of the study to supply the place of speech in the learning of Greek.—*T.* (the founders of the study had attempted)

It is not however attempted to be denied.—*HAZLITT.* (No one attempts to deny)

He will see the alterations that were proposed to be made, but rejected.—*T.* (proposed, but rejected)

The argument by which this difficulty is sought to be evaded.—*BALFOUR.*

The close darkness of the shut-up house (forgotten to be opened, though it was long since day) yielded.—*DICKENS.*

Those whose hours of employment are proposed to be limited.—*T.*

Considerable support was managed to be raised for Waldemar.—*CARLYLE.*

The following experiments with the verb *hope* are still worse, because they cannot even claim the support of usage :—

... luncheon ... at which the King is hoped to be present.—*W. G.*

The final arrangements for what is hoped will prove a 'monster demonstration' of women workers.—*W. G.*

I need not say, how wide the same law ranges, and how much it can be hoped to effect.—*EMERSON.*

We may also notice a curious blunder sometimes made with 'I avail myself of'. The real passive of this, 'I was availed by myself of', is neither used nor wanted; the passives quoted below are absurdities, implying that there is an active non-reflexive verb *avail of*.

Watt and Fulton bethought themselves that, where was power was not devil, but was God; that it must be availed of, and not by any means let off and wasted.—*EMERSON.*

No salvage appliances or staff could have been availed of in time.—*T.*



## 4. The Perfect Infinitive

This has its right and its wrong uses. The right are obvious, and can be left alone. Even of the wrong some are serviceable, if not strictly logical. *I hoped to have succeeded*, for instance, conveys idiomatically that the hope was not fulfilled. So:—

Philosophy began to congratulate herself upon such a proselyte from the world of business, and hoped to have extended her power under the auspices of such a leader.—BURKE.

It was the duty of that publisher to have rebutted a statement which he knew to be a calumny.—BORROW.

But other perfects, while they are still more illogical than these, differ as little in meaning from the present as the *deposuisse* dear to the hearts of elegiac writers ancient and modern differs from *deponere*. And whereas there is at least metre, and very useful metre, in *deposuisse*, there is in our corresponding perfect infinitive neither rhyme nor reason. Thus,

With whom on those golden summer evenings I should have liked to have taken a stroll in the hayfield.—THACKERAY.

*To have taken* means simply to take; the implication of non-fulfilment that justified the perfects above is here needless, being already given in *I should have liked*; and the doubled *have* is ugly in sound. Similar are

If my point had not been this, I should not have endeavoured to have shown the connexion.—T.

The author can only wish it had been her province to have raised plants of nobler growth.—S. FERRIER.

Jim Scudamore would have been the first man to have acknowledged the anomaly.—CROCKETT.

Though certainly before she commenced her mystic charms she would have liked to have known who he was.—BEACONSFIELD.

Peggy would have liked to have shown her turban and bird of paradise at the ball.—THACKERAY.

Another very common form, still worse, occurs especially after *seem* and *appear*, and results from the writer's being too

lazy to decide whether he means *He seems to have been*, or *He seemed to be*. The mistake may be in either verb or both.

[Repudiating the report of an interview] I warned him when he spoke to me that I could not speak to him at all if I was to be quoted as an authority. He *seemed to have taken* this as applying only to the first question he asked me.—*W. G.* (seems)

They, as it has been said of Sterne, seemed to have wished, every now and then, to have thrown their wigs into the faces of their auditors.—*I. DISRAELI.* (seem to have wished . . . to throw)

Lady Austen's fashionable friends occasioned no embarrassment; they *seemed to have preferred* some more fashionable place for summering in, for they *are* not again spoken of.—*SOUTHEY.*

Sometimes *have* is even transferred from the verb with which it would make sense to the other with which it makes nonsense.

On the point of church James was obdurate . . . He would like to have insisted on the other grudging items.—*SLADEN.*

### CONDITIONALS

These, which cost the schoolboy at his Latin and Greek some weary hours, need not detain us long. The reader passes lightly and unconsciously in his own language over mixtures that might have caused him searchings of heart in a dead one.

But there is one corrupt and meaningless form, rapidly gaining ground, that calls for protest. When a clause begins with *as if*, it must be remembered that there is an ellipse. *I treat her as tenderly as if she were my daughter* would be in full *I treat her as tenderly as I should if she were*, &c. If this is forgotten, there is danger in some sentences, though not in this one, of using a present indicative in the place where the verb *were* stands. So :—

We will not appear like fools in this matter, and as if we *have* no authority over our own daughter.—*RICHARDSON.*

This may be accounted for, but not justified, as an attempt to express what should be merely implied, our actual possession of authority.

As if the fruit or the flower not only *depends* on a root . . . but *is* itself actually the root.—MORLEY.

This is absolutely indefensible so far as *is* is concerned ; *depends* has the same motive as *have* in the Richardson.

But this looks as if he *has* included the original 30,000 men.—T.

General Linevitch reports that the army is concentrating as if it *intends* to make a stand.—T.

A mixture between *it apparently intends* and *as if it intended*.

The same rule applies to *as though*.

The use of true subjunctive forms (if he be, though it happen) in conditional sentences is for various reasons not recommended. These forms, with the single exception of *were*, are perishing. As a matter of style, they should be avoided, being certain to give a pretentious air when handled by any one except the skilful and practised writers who need no advice from us. And as a matter of grammar, the instinct for using subjunctives rightly is dying with the subjunctive, so that even the still surviving *were* is often used where it is completely wrong. So

. . . and who, taking my offered hand, bade me 'Good morning'—night-fall though it *were*.—T.

The sentence describes a meeting with a person who knew hardly any English ; he said Good morning, though it *was* nightfall.

*Were*, however, is often right and almost necessary : other subjunctives are never necessary, often dangerous, and in most writers unpleasantly formal. The tiro had much better eschew them.

### PREPOSITIONS

In an uninflected language like ours these are ubiquitous ; and it is quite impossible to write tolerably without a full knowledge, conscious or unconscious, of their uses. Misuse of them, however, does not often result in what may be called in the fullest sense blunders of syntax, but mostly in offences against idiom. It is often impossible to convince a writer that the preposition he has used is a wrong one, because

there is no reason in the nature of things, in logic, or in the principles of universal grammar (whichever way it may be put), why that preposition should not give the desired meaning as clearly as the one that we tell him he should have used. Idioms are special forms of speech that for some reason, often inscrutable, have proved congenial to the instinct of a particular language. To neglect them shows a writer, however good a logician he may be, to be no linguist—condemns him, from that point of view, more clearly than grammatical blunders themselves. But though the subject of prepositions is thus very important, the idioms in which they appear are so multitudinous that it is hopeless to attempt giving more than the scantiest selection; this may at least put writers on their guard. Usages of this sort cannot be acquired from dictionaries and grammars, still less from a treatise like the present, not pretending to be exhaustive; good reading with the idiomatic eye open is essential. We give a few examples of what to avoid.

#### 1. After adjectives and adverbs.

Another stroke of palsy soon rendered Sir Sampson *unconscious* even to the charms of Grizzy's conversation.—S. FERRIER.

To me it is incredible that the British people, who own one-half of the world's sea-going ships, should be so *oblivious to* the manner in which . . . —T.

*Insensible to*, but *unconscious of*; *indifferent to*, but *oblivious of*.

The adjectives *different* and *averse*, with their adverbs or nouns, *differently*, *difference*, *aversion*, *averseness*, call for a few words of comment. There is no essential reason whatever why either set should not be as well followed by *to* as by *from*. But *different to* is regarded by many newspaper editors and others in authority as a solecism, and is therefore better avoided by those to whom the approval of such authorities is important. It is undoubtedly gaining ground, and will probably displace *different from* in no long time; perhaps, however, the conservatism that still prefers *from* is not yet to be named

pedantry. It is at any rate defensive and not offensive pedantry, *different to* being on the whole the aggressor. With *averse*, on the other hand, the use of *from* may perhaps be said to strike most readers as a distinct protest against the more natural *to*, so that *from* is here the aggressor, and the pedantry, if it is pedantry, is offensive. Our advice is to write *different from* and *averse to*.

## 2. After verbs.

I *derive* an unholy pleasure *in* noting.—G. E. P.

We must *content ourselves* for the moment *by* observing that from the juridical standpoint the question is a doubtful one.—T.

The petition which now reaches us from Bloemfontein . . . *contents itself* *by* begging that the isolation laws may be carried out nearer to the homes of the patients.—T.

I content you *by* submitting: I content myself *with* saying.

'Doing one's duty' generally *consists of* being moral, kind and charitable.—D. T.

The external world which is dealt with by natural science *consisted*, according to Berkeley, *in* ideas. According to Mr. Mill *it consists of* sensations and permanent possibilities of sensation.—BALFOUR.

The moon *consists of* green cheese: virtue *consists in* being good. *Consist of* gives a material, *consist in* a definition. Mr. Balfour's 'elegant variation' (see *Airs and Graces*) is certainly wrong.

A scholar *endowed by* [with] an ample knowledge and persuasive eloquence to cite and instance.—MEREDITH.

There is no end *to* [at] which your practical faculty can aim . . .—EMERSON.

You may *forbid* him, if you like, *from* toiling ten hours a day for a wage of a few shillings.—T. (his toiling, *or* him to toil)

His readiness, not only at catching a point, but at making the most of it *on a moment's notice*, was amazing.—DRYCE.

*On* the spur of the moment, but *at* a moment's notice. The motive was, no doubt, to avoid repeating *at*; but such devices are sins if they are detected.

## 3. After nouns.

Mr. Herbert Druce's *reluctance to* the opening of his father's grave was very natural.—W. G.

The Diet should leave to the Tsar *the initiative of* taking such measures as may be necessary.—*T.*

M. Delcassé took *the initiative of* turning the conversation to . . .—*T.* (assume the *right of*, take the *initiative in*, turning)

A power to marshal and adjust particulars, which can only come from an *insight of* [into] their whole connection.—EMERSON.

From its driving energy, its personal weight, its invincible *oblivion to* [of] certain things . . .—H. G. WELLS.

4. Superfluous prepositions, whether due to ignorance of idiom, negligence, or mistaken zeal for accuracy.

A something *of* which the sense can in no way assist the mind to form a conception *of*.—*D. T.*

The Congress could occupy itself with no more important question than *with this*.—HUXLEY.

After *than*, the writer might have gone on *if it occupied itself with this*; but if he means that, he must give it in full.

5. Necessary prepositions omitted.

The Lady Henrietta . . . *wrote him* regularly through his bankers, and once in a while he *wrote her*.—BARONESS VON HUTTEN.

*Write* without *to* will now pass in commercial letters only; elsewhere, we can say 'I write you a report, a letter', but neither\* I will write you ' simply, nor 'I wrote you that there was danger'.

6. Compound prepositions and conjunctions.

The increasing use of these is much to be regretted. They, and the love for abstract expression with which they are closely allied, are responsible for much of what is flaccid, diffuse, and nerveless, in modern writing. They are generally, no doubt, invented by persons who want to express a more precise shade of meaning than they can find in anything already existing; but they are soon caught up by others who not only do not need the new delicate instrument, but do not understand it. *Inasmuch as*, for instance, originally expressed that the truth of its clause gave the exact measure of the truth that belonged to the main sentence.\* So (from the *Oxford Dictionary*):—

God is only God inasmuch as he is the Moral Governor of the world.—  
SIR W. HAMILTON.

But long before Hamilton's day the word passed, very naturally, into the meaning, for which it need never have been invented, of *since* or *because*. Consequently most people who need the original idea have not the courage to use *inasmuch as* for it, like Sir W. Hamilton, but resort to new combinations with *far*. Those new combinations, however, as will be shown, fluctuate and are confused with one another. The best thing we can now do with *inasmuch as* is to get it decently buried; when it means *since*, *since* is better; when it means what it once meant, no one understands it. The moral we wish to draw is that these compounds should be left altogether alone except in passages where great precision is wanted. Just as a word like *save* (except) is ruined for the poet by being used on every page of ordinary prose (which it disfigures in revenge for its own degradation), so *inasmuch as* is spoilt for the logician.

We shall first illustrate the absurd prevailing abuse of the compound preposition *as to*. In each of the following sentences, if *as to* is simply left out, no difference whatever is made in the meaning. It is only familiarity with unnecessary circumlocution that makes such a state of things tolerable to any one with a glimmering of literary discernment. *As to* flows from the pen now at every possible opportunity, till many writers seem quite unaware that such words as *question* or *doubt* can bear the weight of a *whether*-clause without help from this offensive parasite.

With the idea of endeavouring to ascertain as to this, I invited . . .—*T.*

Confronted with the simple question as to in what way other people's sisters, wives and daughters differ from theirs . . .—*D. T.*

It is not quite clear as to what happened.—*W. G.*

Doubt is expressed as to whether the fall of Port Arthur will materially affect the situation.—*T.*

I feel tempted to narrate one that occurred to me, leaving it to your judgment as to whether it is worthy of notice in your paper.—*S.*

German anticipations with regard to the future are apparently based upon the question as to how far the Sultan will . . .—*T.*

Another objection to the compound prepositions and conjunctions is that they are frequently confused with one another or miswritten. We illustrate from two sets. (a) The word *view* is common in the forms *in view of*, *with a view to*, *with the view of*. The first expresses external circumstances, existing or likely to occur, that must be taken into account; as, *In view of these doubts about the next dividend we do not recommend . . .* The other two both express the object aimed at, but must not have the correspondence, *a view to*, *the view of*, upset.

A Resolution was moved and carried *in favour of* giving facilities to the public vaccination officers of the Metropolis to enter the schools of the Board *for the purpose of* examining the arms of the children *with a view to* advising the parents to allow their children to be vaccinated.—*S.*

The Sultan . . . will seek to obtain money by contracting loans with private firms *in view of* beginning for himself the preliminary reforms.—*T.*

If Germany has anything to propose *in view of* the safeguarding of her own interests, it will certainly meet with that courteous consideration which is traditional in French diplomacy.—*T.*

Its execution is being carefully prepared *with a view of* avoiding any collision with the natives.—*T.*

My company has been approached by several firms *with a view of* overcoming the difficulty.—*T.*

Of these the first is correct; but the sentence it comes in is a good warning against the compound-prepositional style. The second should have *with a view to*. Still more should the third, which is ambiguous as well as unidiomatic; the words used ought to mean *seeing that her interests are safeguarded already*. The fourth and fifth should again have *with a view to* (or *with the view of*).

(b) The combinations with *far*—*as far as*, *so far as*, *so far that*, *in so far as*, *in so far that*, of which the last is certainly, and the last but one probably needless—have some distinctions and limitations often neglected. For instance, *as far as* must not be followed by a mere noun except in the literal sense, *as far as London*. *So far as* and *so far that* are distinguished by good writers in being applied, the first to clauses that contain



a doubtful or varying fact, the other to clauses containing an ascertained or positive fact. *So far as* (and *in so far as*), that is, means *to whatever extent*, and *so far that* means *to this extent, namely that*.

The question of the Capitulations and of the Mixed Tribunals is not in any way essentially British, save *in so far as* the position of Great Britain in Egypt makes her primarily responsible.—*T.*

Correct ; but *except that* would be much better than *save in so far as*.

But in the judgment of many officers well qualified to form an opinion, no such department under present conditions is really requisite, *in so far as* the action of the Commander-in-Chief is thwarted in cases where he should be the best judge of what is necessary.—*T.*

Entirely wrong. It is confused with *inasmuch as*, and *since* should be written.

The officials have done their utmost to enforce neutrality, and have *in so far* succeeded as the Baltic fleet keeps outside the three-mile limit.—*T.* Should be *so far succeeded that* ; we are meant to understand that the fleet does keep outside, though it does not go right away as might be wished.

The previous appeal made by M. Delcassé was *so far* successful as the Tsar himself sent orders to Admiral Rozhdestvensky to comply with the injunctions of the French colonial authorities.—*T.*

*As* should be *that*. It is not doubtful to what extent or whether the Tsar sent. He did send ; that is the only point.

They are exceptional in character, *in so far as* they do not appear to be modifications of the epidermis.—HUXLEY.

Should probably be *so far exceptional that*. The point is that there *is* this amount of the exceptional in them, not that their irregularity depends on the doubtful fact of their not being modifications ; the word *appear* ought otherwise to have been parenthetically arranged.

This influence was *so far* indirect in that it was greatly furthered by Le Sage, who borrowed the form of his Spanish contemporaries.—*T.* A mixture of *was so far indirect that* and *was indirect in that*.

He seemed quickly to give up first-hand observation and to be content

to reproduce and re-reproduce his early impressions, always trusting to his own invention, and the reading public's inveterate preference for symmetry and satisfaction, to pull him through. They have pulled him through *in so far as* they have made his name popular; but an artist and a realist—possibly even a humourist—have been lost.—*T.*

*In so far as* leaves the popularity and the pulling through doubtful, which they are clearly not meant to be. It should be *so far that*.

A man can get help from above to do what *as far as* human possibility has proved out of his power.—*D. T.*

This is a whole sentence, not a fragment, as might be supposed. But *as far as* (except in the local sense) must have a verb, finite or infinite. Supply *goes*.

The large majority would reply in the affirmative, *in so far as* to admit that there is a God.—*D. T.*

*So far as to admit*, or *in so far as they would admit*; not the mixture. And this distinction is perhaps the only justification for the existence of *in so far as* by the side of *so far as*; the first is only conjunction, the second can be preposition as well.

## CONJUNCTIONS

### 1. *Like*.

The word *like* is not yet recognized as a conjunction. The development of the correct *He does not walk like me* into *He does not walk like I do* (short for *like as I do*) has analogies in the dropping of *as* and *that* at older stages of the language after they had been appended to mark the conjunctive use of words; compare the use of *so* (*as* or *that*) in the sense *provided, on condition that*. But *like* as a conjunction, though it grows daily commoner in conversation, is avoided even there by careful speakers as a vulgarism, and seldom appears in print. The *Daily Telegraph* examples are all from an illiterate correspondence:—

Sins that were degrading me, like they have many others.—*D. T.*

They should not make a mad, reckless, frontal attack like General Buller made at the battle of Colenso.—*D. T.*

Coming to God the loving Father for pardon, like the poor prodigal did.—*D. T.*

There is no moral force in existence . . . which enlarges our outlook like suffering does.—*D. T.*

The committee, which was to-day, like yesterday, composed of the following gentlemen.—*W. G.*

## 2. *While.*

*While*, originally temporal, has a legitimate use also in contrasts. The further colourless use of it, whether with verb or with participle, as a mere elegant variation for *and* is very characteristic of journalese, and much to be deprecated.

The fireman was killed on the spot, and the driver as well as the guard of the passenger train was slightly injured; *while* the up-line was blocked for some time with débris from broken trucks of the goods train.—*T.*

The deer on the island took some interest in the proceeding, *while* the peacocks on the lawn screamed at the right time.—*B. D. P.*

It cannot be contended that it is more profitable to convey a passenger the twenty-four miles to Yarmouth for payment than to accept the same payment without performing the service; *while*, if the company wish to discourage the use of cheap week-end tickets, why issue them at all?—*T.*

## 3. Double harness.

There are many pairs of words used to yoke together two parallel or connected phrases, the usual type being an adverb with the first phrase and a conjunction with the second. Such are *both . . . and*, *neither . . . nor*, *scarcely . . . when*, *no sooner . . . than*, *in the same breath . . . and*, *equally . . . and*, *as . . . as*, *between . . . and*. It is slovenly to neglect these established correspondences and mix up unconnected forms:—

Diderot presented a bouquet which was *neither* well *or* ill received.—*MORLEY.*

It appears, then, that *neither* the mixed and incomplete empiricism considered in the third chapter, *still less* the pure empiricism considered in the second chapter, affords us . . .—*BALFOUR.*

*Scarcely* was the nice new drain finished *than* several of the children sickened with diphtheria.—*S.*

Which differs from that and who in being used *both* as an adjective *as well* as a noun.—*H. SWEET.*

M. Shipoff *in one and the same breath* denounces innovations, *yet*

bases the whole electoral system on the greatest innovation in Russian history.—*T.*

It would be *equally* absurd to attend to all the other parts of an engine and to neglect the principal source of its energy—the firebox—as it is ridiculous to pay particular attention to the cleanliness of the body and to neglect the mouth and teeth.—*Advt.*

The choice Russia has is *between* payment for damages in money *or* in kind.—*T.*

Forced to choose *between* the sacrifice of important interests on the one hand *or* the expansion of the Estimates on the other.—*T.*

We have in that substance the link *between* organic *or* inorganic matter, which abolishes the distinction *between* living *and* dead matter.—*W. G.* (Observe the 'elegant variation')

The question lies *between* a God and a creed, *or* a God in such an abstract sense that does not signify.—*D. T.*

The author of the last has been perplexed by the *and* in one of his alternatives. He should have used *on the one hand, &c.*

#### 4. *As, such as*, and the relative

*As* must not be expected to do by itself the work of *such as*.

There were not two dragon sentries keeping ward before the gate of this abode, *as* in magic legend are usually found on duty over the wronged innocence imprisoned.—*DICKENS.*

The decision of the French Government to send a special mission to represent France at the marriage of the German Crown Prince is not intended as anything more than a mere act of international courtesy, *as* is customary on such occasions.—*T.*

Neither *as* nor *such as* should be made to do the work of the relative pronoun where there would be no awkwardness in using the pronoun itself.

With a speed of eight knots, *as* [which] has been found practicable in the case of the Suez Canal, the passage would occupy five days.—*T.*

The West Indian atmosphere is not of the limpid brightness and transparent purity *such as* [that] are found in the sketch entitled 'A Street in Kingston'.—*T.*

The ideal statues and groups in this room and the next are scarcely so interesting *as* we have sometimes seen.—*T.* (*As* is clearly here a relative adverb, answering to *so*; nevertheless the construction can be theoretically justified, the full form being *as we have sometimes seen groups interesting*. But it is very ugly; why not say instead *as some that we have seen*?)

## FAULTY COORDINATION, CHANGE OF CONSTRUCTION, &amp;c.

## 1. Unequal yoke-fellows.

When a word admits of two constructions, to use both may not be positively incorrect, but is generally as ugly as to drive a horse and a mule in double harness.

But *supposing nothing changed* and *this Pope* who is made incompetent by the weight at once of his virtues and his ignorances, *enjoys* a long life, we should look for . . .—S.

This undoubtedly caused prices to rise; but did it not also *cause* all *Lancashire* to work short time, many *mills* to close, and a great *restriction* in the purchases of all our customers for cotton goods?—T.

*After* the members of the respective suites *had been presented* to their Majesties, and *the presentation* to the Emperor William of the officers attached to his person while in Austria, the two Emperors proceeded to the Castle of Schoenbrunn.—W. G.

And any one who permits himself this incongruity is likely to be betrayed into actual blunders.

The popularity of the parlements was surely due to the detestation felt for the absolute Monarchy, and because they seemed to half-informed men to be the champions of . . .—T. (Here *because they seemed* does not really fit *the popularity* . . . *was*, but *parlements were popular*)

A difference, this, which was not much considered where and when the end of the war was thought to be two or three years off, and that the last blow would be Russia's.—F. GREENWOOD. (The last clause does not fit *the end of the war was thought*, but *it was thought*)

Attila and his armies, he said, came and disappeared in a very mysterious manner, and *that* nothing could be said with positiveness about them.—BORROW.

The short drives at the beginning of the course of instruction were intended gradually *to accustom* the novice to the speed, and *of giving* him in the pauses an opportunity to . . .—T.

My assiduities expose me rather to her scorn . . . than to the treatment due to a man.—RICHARDSON.

Its hands require strengthening and its resources increased.—T.

## 2. Between two stools.

The commonest form of indecision is that between statement and question.

May I ask *that* if care should be taken of remains of buildings a

thousand years old, *ought not* care to be taken of ancient British earth-works several thousand years old?—*T.*

Can I not make you understand that you are ruining yourself and me, and *that* if you don't get reconciled to your father *what* is to become of you?—*S. FERRIER.*

We will only say *that* if it was undesirable for a private member to induce the Commons to pass a vote against Colonial Preference, *why was it not undesirable* for a private member . . .—*S.*

I then further observed *that* China having observed the laws of neutrality, *how could he* believe in the possibility of an alliance with Russia?—*T.*

\* The following use both the relative and the participle construction, instead of choosing between them.

Thus it befell that our high and low labour vote, *which* (if one might say so in the hearing of M. Jaurès and Herr Bebel) *being* vertical rather than horizontal, and quite unhindered in the United States, of course by an overwhelming majority elected President Roosevelt.—*T.*

He replied to Mr. Chamberlain's Limehouse speech, the only part of *which* that he could endorse *being*, he said, the suggestion that the electorate should go to the root of the question at the next general election.—*T.\**

Prefixes . . . are defined in their vocabulary places, and words formed with them, the meaning of *which being* obvious from the component parts, are grouped in table forms under their respective Prefixes.—*Standard Dictionary.*

### 3. Losing the way.

It often happens that at the point where the main construction should be resumed after a subordinate clause the form of the latter prevails, and what should be parallel with the main sentence is assimilated to the clause:—

I feel, however, that there never was a time when the people of this country were more ready to believe than they are today, and would openly believe if Christianity, with 'doctrine' subordinated, were presented to them in the most convincing of all forms, viz. . . .—*D.\*T.* (*Would believe* is made parallel to *they are today*; it is really parallel to *there never was a time*; and we should read *and that they would openly believe*)

In the face of this statement either proofs should be adduced to show that Coroner Troutbeck has stated facts 'soberly judged', and that they contain 'warrant for the accusation of wholesale' ignorance on the part

of a trusted and eminently useful class of the community, or failing this, that the offensive and unjust charge should be withdrawn.—*T.* (*The charge should be withdrawn* is made parallel to *Coroner Troutbeck has stated* and *they contain*; it is really parallel to *proofs should be adduced*; and we should omit *that*, and read *or failing this, the offensive . . .*)

We cannot part from Prof. Bury's work without expressing our unfeigned admiration for his complete control of the original authorities on which his narrative is based, and of the sound critical judgment he exhibits . . .—*S.* (The judgment is admired, not controlled)

Sometimes the confusion is not merely of the pen, but is in the writer's thought; and it is then almost incurable.

. . . the privilege by which the mind, like the lamps of a mailcoach, moving rapidly through the midnight woods, illuminate, for one instant, the foliage or sleeping umbrage of the thickets, and, in the next instant, have quitted them, to carry their radiance forward upon endless successions of objects.—*DE QUINCEY.*

#### 4. Fresh starts.

The trick of taking breath in the middle of a sentence by means of a resumptive *that* or the like should be avoided; especially when it is a confession rather of the writer's short-windedness than of the unwieldy length of his sentence.

It does not follow (as I pointed out by implication above) that if, according to the account of their origin given by the system, those fundamental beliefs are true, that therefore they are true.—*BALFOUR.*

Sir—Might I suggest that while this interesting question is being discussed that the hymn 'Rock of Ages' be sung in every church and chapel . . . ?—*D. T.*

### ELLIPSE, SUBSTITUTION, &c.

#### 1. Common parts.

It is often desirable to shorten down two parallel sentences or expressions by making them into one sentence &c. in which the part common to both is expressed only once. *Things temporal had altered and things temporal would alter* becomes *Things temporal had altered and would alter*. Care must be taken that parts not common are not treated as though they were, or we get the type:—

*Things temporal had and would alter.*—*D. T.*

The common part is known by its position, which is either before the beginning of the first, or after the end of the second, alternative part; *had* and *would* being the alternative parts, *alter* is here common, and should read correctly with both *had* and *would*; not doing so, it is wrong. There is not the same objection to *had altered, and would*, nor to *would alter, and had*, it being legitimate to supply, out of a verb that has already been used in the first alternative part, whatever is required by the auxiliary of the second. But it would be a foolish standing upon one's rights to do this here; in such sentences the emphatic use of the second verb in full is much to be preferred. The plan of supplying thus, however, is the right way out of the difficulty with such phrases as *one of the finest, if not the finest*,—.

Those of us who still believe in Greek as one of the finest, if not the finest, instruments . . .—*T.*

Write *as one of the finest instruments, if not the finest*. *Instrument* can be supplied out of the previous *instruments*; but if *instruments* is placed after the second alternative part it is thereby declared to be common, and, since it will not read with the second alternative, is obviously and offensively wrong.

Some more examples are added with corrections, which often consist merely in placing words that belong to the common part in their right place before the first or after the second alternative:—

The railway has done all and more than was expected of it.—*S.* (all that was expected of it, and more)

The pamphlet forms not only a valuable addition to our works on scientific subjects, but is also of deep interest to German readers.—*T.* (not only forms; *forms* is not common)

Forty-five per cent of the old Rossallians . . . received either decorations or were mentioned in despatches.—*D. T.* (either received)

It deceived not only the closest observers of his own day, but still misleads historians of ours.—*J. R. GREEN.* (not only deceived)

It had, as all houses should, been in tune with the pleasant, mediocre charm of the island.—*E. F. BENSON.* (had been, as all houses should be or should)



Which neither omits one purpose nor the other.—*T.* (omits neither)

Not only in the matter of malaria, but also beriberi.—*T.* (In the matter not of malaria only, but of beriberi)

There are sometimes objections, however, to placing *either* &c. in the correct place; but before such a word is put in the wrong one it should be considered (1) whether the right one really is impossible, intolerably pedantic, or otherwise unsatisfactory; (2) whether the word itself might not as well be omitted; (3) whether some other change will not put things right. In the example, omit *either*, or write *practically acquainted for have practical acquaintance*:—

. . . by lecturers who themselves are either among the leaders of the different movements, or else, as teachers or officials, have practical acquaintance with the different systems and institutions.—*Speaker.*

## 2. Omission of the conjunction *that*.

This is quite legitimate, but often unpleasant. It is partly a matter of idiom, as, *I presume you know*, but *I assume that you know*; partly of avoiding false scent, as in the third example below, where *scheme* might be object to *discover*. In particular it is undesirable to omit *that* when a long clause or phrase intervenes between it and the subject and verb it introduces, as in the first two examples.

Sir,—We notice *in a leading article in your issue to-day on the Subject of the carriage of Australian mails* you imply that the increased price demanded by the Orient Pacific Line was due to . . .—*T.*

Lord Spencer held that it was impossible *with regard to a question which had broken up the Government and disturbed the country* they could go into a conference which . . .—*T.*

I think he would discover the scheme unfolded and explained in them is a perfectly intelligible and comprehensive one.—*T.*

And it is only by faith the evils you mention as productive of war can be cast out of our hearts.—*T.*

I assume Turkey would require such a cash payment of at least £500,000.—*T.*

Tawno leaped into the saddle, where he really looked like Gunnar of Hlitharend, save and except the complexion of Gunnar was florid, whereas that of Tawno was of nearly Mulatto darkness.—BORROW.

In some of these the motive is obvious, to avoid one *that*—

clause depending on another; the end was good, but the means bad; a more thorough recasting was called for.

### 3. Omission of *as* and of prepositions.

The motive of this is usually to avoid the immediate repetition of the same word; but also the construction of the verb *regard* is wrongly changed on the analogy of *consider*, and that of *class* &c. on the analogy of *call*. Whatever the explanation, these omissions are to be condemned.

I regard it as important as anything.

This I could not help regarding both a most improper as well as a most uncomfortable proceeding.—CROCKETT.

The latter may now be expected to regard himself absolved from such obligation as he previously felt.—T.

A memoir which was justly regarded of so much merit and importance that . . . —HUXLEY.

. . . what might be classed a 'horizontal' European triplice.—T.

The parish priest on whom I called this morning expressed himself a strong Radical.—W. G.

Without troubling myself as to what such self-absorption might lead in the future.—CORELLI. (lead to)

He chose to fancy that she was not suspicious of what all his acquaintance were perfectly aware—namely, that . . . —THACKERAY. (aware of)

. . . Although it is open to doubt as to what extent individual saving through more than one provident institution prevails.—W. G. (as to to; or rather, omit *as*)

### 4. *Do* and *be* as substitutes.

In a second sentence, clause, &c., that would require if expressed fully the complete or partial repetition of the verb used in a previous one, the verb *do* is often used by substitution, or the verb *be* by ellipse, instead of the full verb. When this is done, care must be taken (1) that *be*, not *do*, is used when the previous clause contains part of *be* (whether as auxiliary or as independent verb); where this rule has been neglected, the voice, and the subject, of the substitute or the elliptical verb are often wrong.

As to the question whether *sufficient is known* at present as to the food of birds . . . the author feels bound to reply that *we do* not.—W. G. (*it is* for *we do*)

It may justly be said, as Mr. Paul does, that . . . —*W. G.* (*says or does say for does, or as is done by Mr. P.*)

It . . . ought to have been satisfying to the young man. And so, in a manner of speaking, it did.—*CROCKETT.* (*was for did*)

Although nothing is said officially as to Cabinet rank being associated with the [two] offices, it may be assumed that both do so.—*W. G.* (*it is for both do so*)

Some of them who left us before wrote asking to be reinstated, which we did, notwithstanding the so-called dispute.—*W. G.* (*they were for we did; or us to reinstate them for to be reinstated*)

(2) That the previous expression from which the substitute is supplied is a verb and not a noun.

Mr. T. L. Corbett immediately demanded *the withdrawal* of the imputation, and Mr. Emmott appealed to Captain Donelan to do so. He did so, and there the incident ended.—*W. G.* (*withdraw it for do so; or that C. D. should\*withdraw for the withdrawal of*)

One of the first acts of the Library Committee of the new Borough Council has been to recommend the purchase of yet another billiard-table, and I presume that this will in due course be done.—*S.* (*effected for done; or that . . . should be purchased for the purchase of*)

(3) That the antecedent of any pronoun (*which, this, &c.*) that serves as object of the substituted *do* is not a noun, but a verb or verbal phrase.

To inflict upon themselves a disability which one day they will find the mistake and folly of doing.—*W. G.* (*having inflicted for doing*)

In this example, since there is no comma after *disability*, it is clear that that word by itself is the antecedent of *which*. But we can say *He lost his train, which I had warned him not to do*, because the antecedent of *which* is not *train*, but *lost* or rather *losing his train*.

## ORDER OF WORDS

### 1. Misplacement.

Generous interpretation will generally get at a writer's meaning; but for him to rely on that is to appeal *ad misericordiam*. Appended to the sentences, when necessary, is the result of supposing them to mean what they say.

It is with grief and pain, that, *as admirers of the British aristocracy*, we find ourselves obliged to admit the existence of so many ill qualities in a person whose name is in Debrett.—THACKERAY. (implies that admirers must admit this more than other people)

It is from this fate that the son of a commanding prime minister is *at any rate* preserved.—BAGEHOT. (implies that *preserved* is a weak word used instead of a stronger)

The chairman said there was no sadder sight in the world than to see women drunk, because they seemed to lose *complete* control of themselves. (implies that losing complete control leaves you with less than if you lost incomplete control)

Great and heroic men have existed, who had almost no other information than by the printed page. I *only* would say, that it needs a strong head to bear that diet.—EMERSON. (implies that no one else would say it)

Yes, the laziest of human beings, through the providence of God, *a being, too, of rather inferior capacity*, acquires the written part of a language so difficult that . . .—BORROW.

Putting it to you as a deeply personal matter, don't you think it *very desirable* that ill-health of the hair demands and should receive as much attention . . . as ill-health of the body?—Advt. in *D. T.* (implies that the interests of the public and of patent-medicine vendors are identical)

But in 1798 the Irish rising was crushed in a defeat of the insurgents at Vinegar Hill; and Tippoo's death in the storm of his own capital, Seringapatam, *only* saved him from witnessing the English conquest of Mysore.—J. R. GREEN. (implies that that was all it saved him from)

## 2. Ambiguous position.

In this matter judgement is required. A captious critic might find examples on almost every page of almost any writer; but most of them, though they may strictly be called ambiguous, would be quite justifiable. On the other hand a careless writer can nearly always plead, even for a bad offence, that an attentive reader would take the thing the right way. That is no defence; a rather inattentive and sleepy reader is the true test; if the run of the sentence is such that he at first sight refers whatever phrase is in question to the wrong government, then the ambiguity is to be condemned.

Louis XVIII, dying in 1824, was succeeded, as Charles X, by his brother the Count d'Artois.—E. SANDERSON. (The sleepy reader, assisted by memories of James the First and Sixth, concludes, though not

without surprise, which perhaps finally puts him on the right track, that Louis XVIII of France was also Charles X of some other country)

In 1830 Paris overthrew monarchy by divine right.—MORLEY. (*By divine right* looks so much more like an adverbial than an adjectival phrase that the sleepy reader takes it with *overthrew*)

The library over the porch of the church, which is large and handsome, contains one thousand printed books.—R. CURZON. (A large and handsome library, or porch, or church?)

He refused, at Prince Bismarck's bidding, to sacrifice his Austrian ally to the secret treaty with Russia.—S. (the bidding was *Sacrifice him*, not *Refuse to*)

## CHAPTER III

### AIRS AND GRACES

IN this chapter, which from its nature cannot pretend to be exhaustive, we are concerned with certain ornamental foibles; ebullitions of animal spirits incident to young ladies and gentlemen in the first blush of printed publicity. Our quotations, it is true, do not all correspond strictly to this description; but the reader has already observed that the worst faults can often be quoted from the best authors; it remains for him to reflect that such faults can be tolerated in them—and only in them. Habit, too, has something to do with the matter; some of the journalists quoted below could perhaps tell us whether the downward path of inversion, entered in extreme youth, is easily abandoned.

It seems a fair inference from contemporary literature that the negative equipment of many writers may be summed up in three rules: do not split your infinitives; do not use the word *reliable*; do not place a preposition at the end of a sentence. On these three rules the novice exhausts his powers of abstention. After much painful juggling with prepositions that seem by some perverse law of nature to gravitate towards the end, he looks about for a little ornament, by way of recreation; and, since three hard-and-fast rules do not make an education in taste, he is not very particular where he finds it. Among the numerous temptations that assail him, we select a few, beginning with

#### CERTAIN TYPES OF HUMOUR

Some of the more obvious devices of humorous writers, being fatally easy to imitate, tend to outlive their natural term. *Olfactory organ*, once no doubt an agreeable substitute for *nose*,

has ceased to be legal tender in literature, and is felt to mark a low level in conversation. No amount of classical authority can redeem a phrase that has once reached this stage.

#### a. Polysyllabic humour.

He was a boy whom Mrs. Hackit had pronounced stocky (a word that etymologically, in all probability, conveys some allusion to an instrument of punishment for the refractory).—ELIOT.

Excessively addicted to humming-tops and marbles, with which recreative resources he was in the habit of immoderately distending the pockets of his corduroys.—ELIOT.

No one save an individual not in a condition to distinguish a hawk from a handsaw . . .—T.

But it had its little inconveniences at other times, among which may be enumerated the occasional appearance of the river in the drawing-room, and the contemporaneous disappearance of the lawn and shrubbery.—DICKENS.

The rather lugubrious occupations indicated by Mr. Asquith.—T.

Or perhaps you refrain from any lacteal addition, and rasp your tongue with unmitigated bohea.—ELIOT.

I had . . . subsequently, owing to the incision of the surgeon's lancet, been deprived of much of the vital fluid.—BORROW.

An elderly man stood near me, and a still more elderly female was holding a phial of very pungent salts to my olfactory organ.—BORROW.

The minister, honest man, was getting on his boots in the kitchen to see us home . . . Well, this preparation ministerial being finished, we stepped briskly out.—CROCKETT.

We have ourselves been reminded of the deficiencies of our femoral habiliments.—SCOTT.

#### b. Playful repetition.

When she had banged out the tune slowly, she began a different manner of 'Gettin' up Stairs', and did so with a fury and swiftness quite incredible. She spun up stairs; she whirled up stairs; she galloped up stairs; she rattled up stairs . . . Then Miss Wirt played the 'Gettin' up Stairs' with the most pathetic and ravishing solemnity . . . Miss Wirt's hands seemed to faint and wail and die in variations: again, and she went up with a savage clang and rush of trumpets, as if Miss Wirt was storming a breach.—THACKERAY.

My mind was, to a certain extent, occupied with the marks on the teapot; it is true that the mournful idea strove hard with the marks on the

teapot for the mastery in my mind, and at last the painful idea drove the marks of the teapot out.—BORROW.

The pastrycook is hard at work in the funeral room in Brook Street, and the very tall young men are busy looking on. One of the very tall young men already smells of sherry, and his eyes have a tendency to become fixed in his head, and to stare at objects without seeing them. The very tall young man is conscious of this failing in himself; and informs his comrade that it's his 'exciseman'. The very tall young man would say excitement, but his speech is hazy.—DICKENS.

Mr. Dombey was a grave sight, behind the decanters, in a state of dignity; and the East India Director was a forlorn sight, near the unoccupied end of the table, in a state of solitude; and the major was a military sight, relating stories of the Duke of York to six of the seven mild men (the ambitious one was utterly quenched); and the Bank Director was a lowly sight, making a plan of his little attempt at a pinery, with dessert knives, for a group of admirers; and Cousin Feenix was a thoughtful sight, as he smoothed his long wristbands and stealthily adjusted his wig.—DICKENS.

#### c. The well-worn 'flood-of-tears-and-sedan-chair' pleasantry.

Phib Cook left her evening wash-tub and appeared at her door in soap-suds, a bonnet-poke, and general dampness.—ELIOT.

Sir Charles, of course, rescues her from the clutches of the Italian, and they return together in triumph and a motor-car.—T.

Miss Nipper . . . shook her head and a tin-canister, and began unasked to make the tea.—DICKENS.

And for the rest it is not hard to be a stoic in eight-syllable metre and a travelling-carriage.—LOWELL.

But what the bare-legged men were doing baffled conjecture and the best glasses.—E. F. BENSON.

#### d. Other worn-out phrases of humorous tendency.

For, tell it not in Gath, the Bishop had arrived on a bicycle.—D. SLADEN.

Tell it not in Smith-st., but . . .—G. E. P.

Sleeping the sleep of the just.

The gallant sons of Mars.—T.

Long brown leather gaiters buttoned upon his nether anatomy.—LOCKHART.

Looking for all the world like . . .

Too funny for words.

These two phrases are commonly employed to carry off a humorous description of which the success is doubted.



They are equivalents, in light literature, of the encouragement sometimes offered by the story-teller whose joke from *Punch* has fallen flat: 'You should have seen the illustration'. *Worthy* and *gallant* are similarly used:—

To hear the worthy and gallant Major resume his favourite topic is like law-business, or a person who has a suit in Chancery going on.—HAZLITT.

*Home*.—I would implore God to survey with an eye of mercy their unoffending bairns. *Hume*.—And would not you be disposed to behold them with an eye of *the same materials*?—LANDOR.

Two or three haggard, ragged drawers ran to and fro . . . Guided by one of these blinking *Ganymedes*, they entered . . .—SCOTT.

The ancient *Hebe* who acted as Lord Glenvarloch's cup-bearer took his part against the intrusion of the still more antiquated *Ganymede*, and insisted on old Trapbois leaving the room instantly.—SCOTT.

When a commoner he (Lord Farquhar) had taken rank as the *Amphitryon* of the Heir-Apparent, long before becoming his *Achates* or the right-hand man of Royalty.—*W. G.*

It may be doubted whether any resemblance or contrast, however striking, can make it worth a modern writer's while to call waiters *Ganymedes*, waitresses *Hebes*, postmen *Mercuries*, cabmen *Automedons* or *Jehus*. As to *Amphitryon*, he would be less of a favourite if the precise nature of his hospitality were always borne in mind.

She has guarantees enough and victories *galore*.—*T.*

The English people has insisted on its preference for a married clergy, and Dr. Ingram's successor may have 'arrows in the hand of a giant'.—*T.*

The inverted commas seem to implore the reader's acceptance of this very battered ornament. One could forgive it more easily, if there were the slightest occasion for its appearance.

The only change ever known in his outward man was . . .—DICKENS.

Rob the Grinder, thus transformed as to his outer man . . .—DICKENS.

One hundred parishioners and friends partaking of tea.—*G. A.*

But that's another story.—KIPLING.

But that is 'another story'.—*T.*

Once John Barnaby—but the tale of John Barnaby can wait.—CROCKETT.

Nevertheless, some folk like it so, and even now the Captain, when his

pipe draws well and his grog is to his liking, says—But there is no use in bringing the Captain into the story.—CROCKETT.

The notion that Mr. Kipling, left to himself, is not competent to bring out all the latent possibilities of this phrase is a mistaken one, and argues an imperfect acquaintance with his works.

Many heads in England, I find, are shaken doubtfully over the politics . . . of Australia. They—the politics, not the heads—are tangled, they are unsatisfactory in a high degree.—W. H. FITCHETT.

#### e. Elementary irony.

He had also the comfortable reflection that, by the violent quarrel with Lord Dalgarno, he must now forfeit the friendship and good offices of that nobleman's father and sister.—SCOTT.

Naturally that reference was received with laughter by the Opposition, who are, or profess to be, convinced that our countrymen in the Transvaal do not intend to keep faith with us. They are very welcome to the monopoly of that unworthy estimate, which must greatly endear them to all our kindred beyond seas.—T.

The whole of these proceedings were so agreeable to Mr. Pecksniff, that he stood with his eyes fixed upon the floor . . . , as if a host of penal sentences were being passed upon him.—DICKENS.

The time comes when the banker thinks it prudent to contract some of his accounts, and this may be one which he thinks it expedient to reduce: and then perhaps he makes the pleasant discovery, that there are no such persons at all as the acceptors, and that the funds for meeting all these bills have been got from himself!—H. D. MACLEOD.

*Pleasant* is put because *unpleasant* seemed dull; the writer should have taken the hint, and put nothing at all.

Some pessimists, regarding the reader's case as desperate, assist him with punctuation, italics, and the like:

I was content to be snubbed and harassed and worried a hundred times a day by one or other of the 'great' personages who wandered at will all over my house and grounds, and accepted my lavish hospitality. Many people imagine that it must be an 'honour' to entertain a select party of aristocrats, but I . . . —CORELLI.

And this is how poor people are 'benefited' (?) by the subscribers' donations.—D. T.

The much-prated-of 'kindness of heart' and 'generosity' possessed by millionaires, generally amounts to this kind of thing.—CORELLI.

Was I about to discover that the supposed 'woman-hater' had been tamed and caught at last?—CORELLI.

That should undoubtedly have been your 'great' career—you were born for it—made for it! You would have been as brute-souled as you are now . . .—CORELLI.

### ELEGANT VARIATION

We include under this head all substitutions of one word for another for the sake of variety, and some miscellaneous examples will be found at the end of the section. But we are chiefly concerned with what may be called pronominal variation, in which the word avoided is either a noun or its obvious pronoun substitute. The use of pronouns is itself a form of variation, designed to avoid ungainly repetition; and we are only going one step further when, instead of either the original noun or the pronoun, we use some new equivalent. 'Mr. Gladstone', for instance, having already become 'he', presently appears as 'that statesman'. Variation of this kind is often necessary in practice; so often, that it should never be admitted except when it is necessary.

None the less Mrs. Scott [Sir Walter's mother] was a motherly comfortable woman, with much tenderness of heart, and a well stored, vivid memory. Sir Walter, writing of her, after *his mother's* death, to Lady Louisa Stewart, says . . .—HUTTON.

*His mother's* is not only unnecessary, but misleading: there is a difficulty in realizing that *her* and *his mother*, so placed, can be meant to refer to the same person. So in the next:

Count Bismarck must have smiled a grim smile. His enemy had delivered himself into *Bismarck's* hands.—J. MCCARTHY.

Mr. J. Hays Hammond, a friend of President Roosevelt, lecturing before the American Political Science Association, quoted a recent utterance of the President of the Japanese House of Peers. *That dignitary* said: . . .—S.

*That dignitary said* might have been omitted, with the full stop before it.

Mr. Sidney Lee's study of the Elizabethan Sonnets, the late Mr. Charles Elton's book on Shakespeare's Family and Friends, and Professor

Bradley's on Shakespearean Tragedy—a work which may be instructively read with Professor Campbell's 'Tragic Drama in Aeschylus, Sophocles and Shakespeare'—remind us that *the dramatist* still holds his own with the publishers. The last two or three weeks have seen two new editions of him.—T.

The writer has thoroughly puzzled himself. He cannot call Shakespeare Shakespeare, because there is a Shakespeare just before: he cannot call him *he*, because six other persons in the sentence have claims upon *he*: and he ought not to call him *the dramatist*, because Aeschylus and Sophocles were dramatists too. We know, of course, which dramatist is meant, just as we should have known which *he* was meant; but the appropriation is awkward in either case. *The dramatist* is no doubt the best thing under the circumstances; but when matters are brought to such a pass that we can neither call a man by his own name, nor use a pronoun, nor identify him by means of his profession, it is time to remodel the sentence.

If Mr. Chamberlain has been injured by the fact that till now Mr. Balfour has clung to him, Mr. Balfour has been equally injured by the fact that Mr. Chamberlain has persistently locked his arm in *that of the Prime Minister*.—S.

Elegant variation is the last thing we should expect here. For what is the writer's principal object? Clearly, to emphasize the idea of reciprocity by the repetition of names, and by their arrangement. 'If Mr. Chamberlain has been injured by the persistent attachment of Mr. Balfour, Mr. Balfour has been equally injured by that of Mr. Chamberlain.' But that is not all that is required: there is to be the graphic touch; arm is to be locked in arm. Now comes the difficulty: in whose arm are we to lock Mr. Chamberlain's? in 'his'? in '*his*'? in 'his own'? in 'Mr. Balfour's'? in 'that of the Prime Minister'? As the locking of arms is perhaps after all only an elegant variation for clinging, remodelling seems again to be the best way out of the difficulty. Perhaps our simplified form above might serve.

On Thursday evening last, as a horse and cart were standing at Mr. Brown's shop, the animal bolted.

'The horse'.—An unconscious satirist, of tender years but ripe discernment, parsed 'animal' in this sentence as a personal pronoun; it 'replaced the subject of the sentence'.

*The Emperor* received yesterday and to-day General Baron von Beck . . . It may therefore be assumed with some confidence that the terms of a feasible solution are maturing themselves in *His Majesty's* mind and may form the basis of further negotiations with Hungarian party leaders when *the Monarch* goes again to Budapest.—*T.*

These elephantine shifts distract our attention from the matter in hand; we cannot follow His Majesty's movements, for wondering what the Emperor will be called next time.

But variation of this kind is, at the worst, less offensive than that which is employed as a medium for the conveyance of sprightly allusion, mild humour, or parenthetical information.

When people looked at his head, they felt he ought to have been a giant, but he was far from *rivalling the children of Anak*.—H. CAINE.

'Far from it', in fact.

He never fuddled himself with rum-and-water in his son's presence, and only talked to his servants in a very reserved and polite manner; and *those persons* remarked . . .—THACKERAY.

'What made ye sae late?' said Mr. Jarvie, as I entered the dining-parlour of *that honest gentleman*.—SCOTT.

At the sixth round, there were almost as many *fellows shouting out* 'Go it, Figs', as there were *youths exclaiming* 'Go it, Cuff'.—THACKERAY.

Great advances in the education of women . . . are likely, perhaps, to find more congenial soil in Universities less bound by time-honoured traditions and by social conventions than Oxford or Cambridge. What-ever may be the case *by Isis or Cam*, . . .—*T.*

Our representative yesterday ran down to Brighton to interview the Cambridge Captain. *The weight-putter and high-jumper* received him with his usual cordiality.

This is a favourite newspaper type.

The miscellaneous examples given below (except 'the former of the last two') are connected with pronominal variation only so far as they illustrate the same principle of false elegance.

This volume *gives* to me, as it must *impart* to others, . . .—*I. L. N.*  
 . . . hardly calculated to impress *at this juncture* more than upon any  
*former occasion* the audience . . .—*T.*

His mother *possessed* a good development of benevolence, but he *owned*  
 a better and larger.—*C. BRONTË.*

In the subjoined official record of 'business done', transactions *marked*  
 thus \* relate to small bonds, those *signalized* thus † to small bonds free  
 of stamp and fee; and those *distinguished* thus + to an exceptional amount  
 at special rates. Stocks and shares marked thus †† have paid no divi-  
 dend for the last two half-years and upwards.—*T.*

The return to *marked* is humiliating; we would respectfully  
 suggest *characterized*. So, in the next, *as to* is forgotten:

*Concerning* Morocco, Prince von Bülow and Sir Charles Hardinge will  
 have been at one *concerning* their opinion *about* the assurances given by  
 the French government *anent* the measures they have been enforced to  
 take.—*W. G.*

THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS.—The war of the volumes still goes on.  
 —*W. G.*

*America needs* a larger supply of *gold* than would be *required* by either  
 Germany or England under a similar set of circumstances. The average  
 amount per head of the *yellow metal* which *suffices* in this country and in  
 Germany is altogether *inadequate* in the *United States*.—*W. G.*

One might be more intelligible in such moods if one wrote in *waving*  
*lines*, and accordingly the question 'Why do you not ask Alfred Tennyson  
 to your home?' is written in *undulating script*.—*S.*

Eighty-three volumes are *required* for letter "M," seventy-seven are  
*demandd* by "L," and seventy-six are perforce *conceded* to "B"; but  
*the former of the last two* . . .—*W. G.*

I must *ask* the reader to *use* the same twofold procedure that I before  
*requested* him to *employ* in considering . . .—*H. SIDGWICK.*

We have not room to record at length, from the *Westminster*  
*Gazette*, the elegant variety of fortune that attended certain  
 pictures, which (within twenty lines) made, fetched, changed  
 hands for, went for, produced, elicited, drew, fell at, accounted  
 for, realized, and were knocked down for, various sums.

## INVERSION

In modern English prose, the subject of an affirmative sen-  
 tence usually precedes the verb. There are, however, several  
 types of sentence in which this order is inverted. Inversion is

normal in questions and exclamations, is unavoidable after *nor*, and, perhaps by extension from *nor*, is common after such negative formulae as *in no case*, *neither of which*, &c.

In affirmative sentences also there is one legitimate kind of inversion. We may call it 'balance' inversion, its prime object being to balance the sentence by securing due prominence for its unemphatic part, which, in its normal position at the end, would suffer virtual annihilation. The following are familiar types:—

Among the guests were A, B, C, . . . Z.

First on our list comes local option.

On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

It is often stated that the object of such inversion is to place the emphatic words at the beginning; and, absurd as that idea is in view of our first two examples, the third may seem at first sight to countenance it. In fact, however, these three inversions are on the same principle. 'On these two commandments' is no more emphatic than 'Among the guests'. The commandments are all-important; the whole context is concerned with nothing but their importance; but the *words* are not emphatic; the whole point of the particular sentence lies in the 'Law and the Prophets'. Inversion of this type has often the further advantages of showing at once (as in all three examples) the connexion with what has preceded, and of removing ambiguity as to the point, as in our second example, where the normal order would leave us in doubt whether the question at issue was 'What comes first?' or 'Where does local option come?'.

The ludicrous abuse of inversion now prevalent seems to arise from this misconception as to emphasis, encouraged by the negative types shown above. Emphasis is an elastic word, at least in some people's mouths; an excuse once formulated, the novice, predisposed to anything that will excite attention at a minimum of intellectual cost, forgets that an excuse was ever wanted; and is frequently discovered,

as in the appended examples, standing on his head from pure lightness of heart.

A book of 'levities and gravities', it would seem from the author's dedication, is this set of twelve essays.—*W. G.*

Futile were the endeavor to trace back to Pheidias' varied originals, as we are tempted to do, many of the later statues. . . —*L. M. MITCHELL.*

Inevitably critical was the attitude that he adopted towards religion . . . Odious to him were, on the one hand, . . . —*J. E.*

Finely conceived is this poem, and not less admirable in execution.—*W. G.*

Facile and musical, sincere and spontaneous, are these lyrics.—*W. G.*

Then to the resident Medical Officer at the Brompton Hospital for Consumption for an authoritative opinion on the subject went the enquirer.—*W. G.*

Fully illustrated by Vernon Howe Bailey is Mrs. St. Julian Ravenel's historical volume 'Charleston: the Place and the People'.—*W. G.*

Illustrated also, though much more sparsely, is the new edition of Byron's *Don Juan*.—*W. G.*

Of interest to all English people who cherish their mother tongue are the writings of William Cobbett.—*W. G.*

Quite interesting is it to gather the views of City men on the colossal crash in Wall Street.—*W. G.*

Of only moderate interest is the summer exhibition of the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours, which opened on Monday.—*N.*

A very readable number is the 'Pall Mall Magazine' for September. Properly given the first place is a profusely-illustrated article on 'Mr. Speaker at Home', by Oakley Williams. . . . Similarly true is it that he is above party.—*D. T.*

Fresh in all memories is the controversy between the President of the United States and Mr. E. H. Harriman.—*W. G.*

Apparently unending is the flow of editions of Omar Kháyám, as Englished by Fitzgerald.—*W. G.*

Welcome, for instance, are the pithy extracts from the books of the Apocrypha.—*W. G.*

Round these lines of Shelley's is 'The Longest Journey', by E. M. Forster (Blackwood), written; of two sorts are all novels, the hand-made and the machine-made. . . . Very easily might the veteran romance-hunter label it commonplace. . . . Hardly, too, will you fail to start on it a second time. . . . Into his own well has his own cup dipped.—*W. G.*

From one short review are these last five. Perhaps unique is the accumulation; amazing, at least, is it.



## ARCHAISM

Nothing is more natural than that a young writer, discovering that excellent prose has come down to us from centuries earlier than the nineteenth, should be eager to give readers the benefit of his find—to the extent, say, of an occasional *ere*, *oft*, *aught*, *thereanent*, *howbeit*, *save*, *perchance*, *I wot*, *I trow*, *you shall find*, or similar ornament. Against this temptation he should fortify himself, reflecting that a fair proportion of the reading public has been at the fountain-head before him, and that the rest are already familiar with the above selection at second-hand. Apart from these more obvious archaisms, it should be noticed that the modern prose form is *if I am*, not *if I be*; *it would be*, not *it were*; *there*, not *thither*; *of which*, not *whereof*; *to it*, not *thereto*; *except*, *perhaps*, *before*, *though*, not *save*, *perchance*, *ere*, *albeit*. The use of *be* for *am* and *is* tells us that a writer wishes to be dignified, but gives pomposity, not dignity, to his style.

Don Quixote *shall* last you a month for breakfast reading.—S.

Take them as they come, you *shall* find in the common people a surly indifference.—EMERSON.

If you . . . push through the thick jungle that skirts the water's lip, you *shall* find tombstones hidden under your foot's fall . . .—W. G.

Open your Thackeray, or if a Peerage or Book of the Gentle Families *lie* by, open that; and you *shall* find how large Jamaica loomed amongst us in the days of slavery, before the thirties of the eighteen hundreds.—W. G.

The worst of mounting the high horse is that he will not let you get down, even to mention a date.

One *needs* not praise their courage.—EMERSON.

If Mr. Hobhouse's analysis of the vices of popular government *be* correct, much more would seem to be needed.—T.

Mr. Bowen has been . . . ordered to Washington, and will be expected to produce proof, if any he *have*, of his charges against Mr. Loomis.—T.

It *were* futile to attempt to deprive it of its real meaning.—T.

It *were* idle to deny that the revolutionary movement in Russia is nowhere followed with keener interest than in this country.—T.

It *were* idle to deny that coming immediately after the Tangier demonstration it assumes special and unmistakable significance.—T.

He is putting poetic 'fills', if the phrase *be* not too mean, on what is better stated in the prose summary of the argument.—T.

Regarded as a counter-irritant to slang, archaism is a failure. *Frills* is ten times more noticeable for the prim and pompous *be*.

'I have no particular business at L.,' said he; 'I was merely going *thither* to pass a day or two.'—BORROW.

It will necessitate my recurring *thereto* in the House.—S.

The Scottish Free Church had *theretofore* prided itself upon the rigidity of its orthodoxy.—BRYCE.

The special interests of France in Morocco, *whereof* the recognition by Great Britain and Spain forms the basis of the international agreements concluded last year by the French Government.—T.

To what extent has any philosophy or any revelation assured us *hereof* till now?—F. W. H. MYERS.

On the concert I need not dwell; the reader would not care to have my impressions *thereanent*.—C. BRONTË.

My ignorance is of no moment *save* to myself.—T.

Who now reads Barry Cornwall or Talfourd *sadæ* only in connexion with their memorials of the rusty little man in black?—T.

*Perchance* neither correctly forecasted the actual result.—T.

He is certainly not cruising on a trade route, or his presence would long *ere* this have been reported.—T.

Mr. Shaynor unlocked a drawer, and *ere* he began to write, took out a meagre bundle of letters.—KIPLING.

Fortifications are fixed, immobile defences, and must await the coming of an enemy *ere* they can exercise their powers of offence.—T.

*Ere* departing, however, I determined to stroll about.—BORROW.

Such things as our modern newspapers chronicle, *albeit* in different form.—CORELLI.

There could be no better use of the money, *albeit* the best American colleges, with perhaps one exception, have very strong staffs of professors.—T.

His thoughts are expressed in plain, unmistakable language, *howbeit* with the touch of a master hand.—D. T.

The writer means *albeit*; he would have been safer with *though*.

Living in a coterie, he seems to have read the laudations and not to have noticed *ought* else.—T.

Hence, if higher criticism, or *ought* besides, compels any man to question, say, the historic accuracy of the fall . . .—D. T.

Many a true believer *owned not up* to his faith.—D. T.

The controversy now going on in your columns *anent* 'Do we believe?' throws a somewhat strange light upon the religion of to-day.—D. T.

It is because the world has not accepted *the* religion of Jesus Christ our Lord, that the world is in *the parlous state* we see it still.—D. T.

We have *well-nigh* bordering on 300 different interpretations.—*D. T.*

It is quite a common thing to see ladies . . . *here* returning home from church enter shops and make purchases which might *every whit* as well have been effected on the Saturday.—*D. T.*

How *oft* do those who train young minds need to urge . . .—*D. T.*

Is there one man, or one woman, in a hundred who would not unhesitatingly declare . . . ? I *throw* not.—*W. G.*

I should be *right* glad if the substance could be made known.—*D. T.*

So sordid are the lives of such natures, who are not only not heroic to their valets and waiting-women, but have neither valets nor waiting-women to be heroic to *withal*.—DICKENS.

### METAPHOR

Strictly speaking, metaphor occurs as often as we take a word out of its original sphere and apply it to new circumstances. In this sense almost all words can be shown to be metaphorical when they do not bear a physical meaning; for the original meaning of almost all words can be traced back to something physical; in our first sentence above, for instance, there are eight different metaphors. Words had to be found to express mental perceptions, abstract ideas, and complex relations, for which a primitive vocabulary did not provide; and the obvious course was to convey the new idea by means of the nearest physical parallel. The commonest Latin verb for *think* is a metaphor from vine-pruning; 'seeing' of the mind is borrowed from literal sight; 'pondering' is metaphorical 'weighing'. Evidently a metaphor of this kind is different in intention and effect from such a phrase as *smouldering discontent*, in which the metaphorical idea is still prominent; *smouldering* is live metaphor, *pondering* is dead. A modern language is packed with metaphors in all stages of vitality; and the novice should not be bullied by the mere name metaphor, but use his own judgement as to the vitality of the particular word; for on that depends its effect.

Perhaps the fault that counts for most in modern writing is the over-use of more or less hackneyed but still conscious metaphors, inoffensive as individuals, but producing a noisy

effect in the aggregate. 'Cries aloud for', 'drop the curtain on', 'goes hand in hand with', 'a note of warning' (it is surprising what a number of things are observed nowadays to strike a note of warning, a pathetic note, and so on), 'leaves its impress', 'paves the way for', 'heralds the advent of', 'opens the door to', and a hundred others, apparently indispensable or irresistible to the modern journalist, have to answer for much inflation of style.

Mixed metaphor, on the other hand, ought not to be the bugbear that it is. Newspaper critics of the anti-split-infinitive type are never tired of hunting down what they believe to be mixed metaphors, and are seldom fortunate in their captures; we shall see some instances below. It should be observed that (1) if only one of the metaphors is a live one, the confusion is not a confusion for practical purposes; (2) confusion can exist only between metaphors that are grammatically inseparable; and punctuation is in this respect no criterion; (3) confusion is often alleged against a sentence that contains only one metaphor, where the fault really is that the metaphor is not adequately sustained by the rest of the sentence; abandonment is usually the best remedy for this.

A few instances will suffice to illustrate the nonsense that is talked about mixed metaphor, and the importance of distinguishing between live and dead.

This, as you know, was a burning question; and its unseasonable introduction threw a chill on the spirits of all our party.

*Burning* and *chill* are both live metaphors, they are grammatically connected by *its*, and they are inconsistent; there is therefore confusion.

The uncertainty which hangs over every battle extends in a special degree to battles at sea.—S.

*Extends* is usually dead; and if in this case it is living, it is also suitable.

Sir W. Laurier had claimed for Canada that she would be the granary and baker of the Empire, and Sir Edmund Barton had claimed for

Australia that she would be the Empire's butcher; but in New Zealand they had not all their eggs in one basket, and they could claim a combination of the three.

This is quoted in a newspaper as an example of mixed metaphor. It is nothing of the kind: *they* in New Zealand are detached from the metaphor.

We move slowly and cautiously from old moorings in our English life, that is our laudable constitutional habit; but my belief is that the great majority of moderate churchmen, to whatever political party they may belong, desirous as they are to lift this question of popular education out of the party rut, . . .

'A rut', says the same newspaper, 'is about the very last thing we should expect to find at sea, despite the fact that it is ploughed'. There is no mention of ruts at sea; the two metaphors are independent. If the speaker had said 'Moderate churchmen, moving at length from their old moorings, are beginning to lift this question out of the party rut', we should have had a genuine confusion, the *moorings* and the *rut* being then inseparable. Both this sentence and the preceding one, the reader may think, would have been better without the second metaphor; we agree, but it is a question of taste, not of correctness.

. . . the keenest incentive man can feel to remedy ignorance and abolish guilt. It is under the impelling force of this incentive that civilization progresses.—S.

This illustrates the danger of deciding hastily on the deadness of a metaphor, however common it may be. Probably any one would have said that the musical idea in *incentive* had entirely vanished; but the successive attributes *keenness* and *impelling force* are too severe a test; the dead metaphor is resuscitated, and a perceptible confusion results.

Her forehand drive—her most trenchant asset.—D. M.

Another case of resuscitation.

And the very fact that the past is beyond recall imposes upon the present generation a continual stimulus to strive for the prevention of such woes.—S.

We *impose* a burden, we *apply* a *stimulus*. It looks as if the

writer had meant by a short cut to give us both ideas; if so, his guilt is clear; and if we call *impose* a mere slip in idiom, the confusion is none the less apparent.

The rest are instances of unsustained metaphor, of the clash between literal and metaphorical. It is sometimes possible, and worth while, to save the metaphor by means of a personified abstract or other device. 'Their ambition has to content itself'; 'Education, among the Protestants and Presbyterians, was stunted etc.'; 'had conversation with a Spaniard, who...'; 'saw' would be one degree more ludicrous than 'heard'.

The elementary schools are hardly to be blamed for this failure. Their aim and their achievement have to content themselves chiefly with moral rather than with mental success.—S.

The means of education at the disposal of the Protestants and Presbyterians of the North were stunted and sterilized.—DALFOUR.

I once heard a Spaniard shake his head over the present Queen of Spain.—(Quoted by S.)

They are cyphers living under the shadow of a great man.—N. R.

These remarks have been dictated in order that the importance of recognizing the difference and the value of soils may be understood.—J. LONG.

This metaphor always requires that the dictator—usually a personified abstract—should be mentioned. 'Dictated by the importance'.

### QUOTATION

The desire to exhibit one's extensive reading is natural, but should be controlled. It manifests itself in various forms: the forced, the elephantine, the ponderously adapted, the platitudinous. Special protest may be made against the jerky introduction of a passage in two or three instalments, the facetious perversion of proverbs, and the trick of constructing Latin cases with English governing words.

The words were very civil. They were words as sweet as those of which Cassius says, that 'they rob the Hybla bees and leave them honeyless'.—J. MCCARTHY.

They were as utterly baffled as Sir Giles Overreach in Massinger's play, when pulling out the document on which he is to rely, he finds it only 'a fair skin of parchment', with 'neither wax nor words'. 'What prodigy is this? I am o'erwhelmed with wonder,' an astounded peer might have

exclaimed; 'what subtle spirit hath razed out the inscription?'—J. MCCARTHY.

In the summer of 1867 England received with strange welcome a strange visitor. 'Quis novus hic nostris successit sedibus hospes?' Looking forward into the future we may indeed apply yet other words of Dido, and say of the new comer to these shores 'Quibus ille jactatus fatis!' It was the Sultan of Turkey who came to visit England.—J. MCCARTHY.

True; we may.

'Our Italy' once again 'shone o'er with civil swords.'—J. MCCARTHY.

Jamaica was in an unquiet state. 'Within the land', as in the territory of the chiefs round Lara's castle, 'was many a malcontent, who cursed the tyranny to which he bent.' There, too, 'Frequent broil within had made a path for blood and giant sin, that waited but a signal to begin new havoc such as civil discord blends.' On October 7th, 1865, some disturbances took place . . .—J. MCCARTHY.

Though his denial of any steps in that direction may be true in his official capacity, *there is probably some smoke in the fire of comment* to which his personal relations with German statesmen have given rise.—T. (The reversal of smoke and fire may be a slip of the pen or a joke; but the correction of it mends matters little)

The pied à terre which Germany hopes she has won . . . will merely represent, like so many other German enterprises, *the end of the beginning*.—T. (The reversal this time is clearly facetious)

But the problem of inducing a *refractory camel* to squeeze himself through the eye of an *inconvenient needle* is and remains insoluble.—T.

Is there no spiritual purge to make the eye of the camel easier for a South-African millionaire?—T.

Salmasius alone was not *unworthy sublimi flagello*.—LANDOR.

Even if a change were desirable *with Kitchener duce et auspice*.—T.

If misbehaviour be not checked in an effectual manner before long there is every prospect that the whips of the existing Motor Act will be transformed into the scorpions of the Motor Act of the future.—T.

Quotation may be material or formal. With the first, the writer quotes to support himself by the authority (or to impugn the authority) of the person quoted; this does not concern us. With the second, he quotes to add some charm of striking expression or of association to his own writing. To the reader, those quotations are agreeable that neither strike him as hackneyed, nor rebuke his ignorance by their complete novelty, but rouse dormant memories. Quotation,

then, should be adapted to the probable reader's cultivation. To deal in trite quotations and phrases therefore amounts to a confession that the writer either is uncultivated himself, or is addressing the uncultivated. All who would not make this confession are recommended to avoid such things as : chartered libertine, balm in Gilead, my prophetic soul, harmless necessary, e pur si muove, there's the rub, the curate's egg, hinc illae lacrimae, fit audience though few, a consummation devoutly to be wished, more in sorrow than in anger, metal more attractive, heir of all the ages, curses not loud but deep, more sinned against than sinning, the irony of fate, the psychological moment, the man in the street, the sleep of the just, a work of supererogation, the pity of it, the scenes he loved so well, in her great sorrow, all that was mortal of—, few equals and no superior, Mr. Punch's advice to those about to marry.

The plan partook of the nature of that of those ingenious islanders who lived entirely by taking in each other's washing.—E. F. BENSON.

For he was but moderately given to 'the cups that cheer but not inebriate', and had already finished his tea.—ELIOT.

Austria forbids children to smoke in public places ; and in German schools and military colleges there are laws upon the subject ; France, Spain, Greece, and Portugal *leave* the matter *severely alone*.—W. G. (*Severely* is much worse than pointless here)

They carried compulsory subdivision and restriction of all kinds of skilled labour down to a degree *that would have been laughable enough, if it had only been less destructive*.—MORLEY.

If Diderot had visited . . . Rome, even the mighty painter of the Last Judgment . . . would have found an interpreter worthy of him. *But it was not to be*.—MORLEY.

Not only where invalids *do* congregate, but . . .—T.

Mr. de Sélincourt has, of course, *the defects of his qualities*.—T.

The beloved *lustige Wien* [Vienna, that is] of his youth had *suffered a sea-change*. The green glacis down which Sobieski drove the . . . army of Kara Mustafa was blocked by ranges of grand new buildings.—W. G.

Every one who detects a writer pretending to more knowledge than he has jumps to the conclusion that the detected must know less than the detective, and cannot be worth his reading. Incorrect allusion of this kind is therefore fatal :—



Homer would have seemed arrogantly superior to his audience if he had not called Hebe 'white-armed' or 'ox-eyed'.—*T.* (He seldom mentions her, and calls her neither)

But it was not too late for me yet to pluck the golden apples of Hesperides.—CORELLI. (It is hardly possible for any one who knows what the Hesperides were to omit *the*)

My publisher, John Morgeson . . . was not like Shakespeare's Cassio strictly 'an honourable man'.—CORELLI. (Cassio was an honourable man, but was never called so. Even Cassius has only his share in *So are they all, all honourable men*. Brutus, perhaps?)

But impound the car for a longer or shorter period according to the offence, and that, as the French say, 'will give them reason to think'.—*T.* (The French do not say *give reason to think*; and if they did the phrase would hardly be worth treating as not English; they say *give to think*, as every one ought to know from its nauseating frequency in newspapers)

Before *leading question* or *the exception proves the rule* is written, a lawyer should be consulted; before *cui bono*, Cicero; before *more honoured in the breach than the observance*, Hamlet. A leading question is one that unfairly helps a witness to the desired answer; *cui bono* and *the exception &c.* are explained elsewhere; *more honoured, &c.*, means not that the rule is generally broken, but that it is better broken. A familiar line of Shakespeare, on the other hand, gains by being misunderstood: 'one touch of nature makes the whole world kin' merely means 'In one respect, all men are alike'.

But *cui bono* all this detail of our debt? Has the author given a single light towards any material reduction of it? Not a glimmering.—BURKE.

A rule dated March 3, 1801, which has never been abrogated, lays it down that, to obtain formal leave of absence, a member must show some sufficient cause, such as . . . but this rule is more honoured in the breach than in the observance.—*T.*

Every one knows that the Governor-General in Council is invested by statute with the supreme command of the Army and that it would be disastrous to subvert that power. But 'why drag in Velasquez'? If any one wishes us to infer that Lord Kitchener has, directly or indirectly, proposed to subvert this unquestioned and unquestionable authority, they are very much mistaken.—*T.* (Why indeed? no worse literary treason than to spoil other people's wit by dragging it in where it is entirely pointless. *Velasquez* here outrages those who know the story, and perplexes those who do not)

The Nationalist, M. Archdeacon, and M. Meslier put to the Prime Minister several *leading questions*, such as, 'Why were you so willing promptly to part with M. Delcassé, and why, by going to the conference, did you agree to revive the debate as to the unmistakable rights . . . ?' To these pertinent inquiries M. Rouvier did not reply.—*T.* (Leading questions are necessarily not hostile, as these clearly were)

The happy phrase that an Ambassador is an honest man sent abroad to lie for his country.—*W. G.* (Happier when correctly quoted: sent to lie abroad for the good of)

We conclude with some misquotations. The first few are so common that it is not worth while to quote authors for them. Corrections are given in brackets.

*A poor* thing, sir, but mine own. (an ill-favoured)

*Small* by degrees and beautifully less. (fine)

*The last infirmity of noble minds.* (that: mind),

Make assurance *doubly* sure. (double)

To-morrow to fresh *fields* and pastures new. (woods)

The devil can *quote* Scripture for his purpose. (cite)

Chewing the *cud* of sweet and bitter fancy. (food)

A goodly apple rotten at the *core*. (heart)

Now for the trappings and the *weeds* of woe.—*S. FERRIER.* (suits)

She felt her genius *repressed* by her, as *Julius Caesar's* was by *Cassius*.

—*S. FERRIER.* (*rebuked, Mark Antony's, Caesar*)

The new drama represented the very age and body of the time, his form and *feature*.—*J. R. GREEN.* (pressure)

Other moving *incidents* by flood and field.—*T.* (accidents)

To him this *rough* world was but too literally a rack.—*LOWELL.* (who would, upon the rack of this *tough* world, stretch him out longer)

Having once begun, they found returning more tedious than *giving* o'er.—*LOWELL.* (returning were as tedious as *go* o'er)

*Posthaec [sic] meminisse juvabit.*—*HAZLITT.* (et haec olim)

*Quid* vult valde vult. What they do, they do with a will.—*EMERSON.* (quod) *Quid* is not translatable.

Then that wonderful *esprit du corps*, by which we adopt into our self-love everything we touch.—*EMERSON.* (de)

Let not him that *putteth* on his *armour* boast as *him* that *taketh* it off.—*W. G.* (girdeth, harness, boast himself, he, putteth)

Elizabeth herself, says Spenser, 'to mine *open* pipe inclined her ear'.—*J. R. GREEN.* (oaten)

Heathen Kaffirs, et hoc genero, &c.: . . .—*D. M.* (genus omne)

If she takes her husband *au pied de lettre*.—*W. G.* (de la lettre)

To read the Arabian Nights *aux pieds de la lettre*.—*W. G.*

It was 'under the *fall* of Mole, that mountain hoar', that he spent the memorable years in which . . .—J. R. GREEN. (*foot*)

*Petty* spites of the village *squire*.—S. (pigmy: spire)

THE TRAMP AS CENSOR MORES. Mr. Bart Kennedy is very hard on the professional critic . . .—W. G. (*morem*. More power to Mr. Kennedy's elbow)

'Obstinate questionings of *invisible* things'.—J. R. GREEN.

On the contrary, 'sense and outward things'; the writer has this misquotation in at least three places.

### ANTICS

Straining after the dignified, the unusual, the poignant, the high-flown, the picturesque, the striking, often turns out badly. It is not worth while to attain any of these aims at the cost of being unnatural. \*

#### 1. Use of stiff, full-dress, literary, or out-of-the-way words.

And in no direction was the slightest concern *evinced*.—T.

The majority display *scant* anxiety for news.—T.

. . . treating his characters on broader lines, occupying himself with more elemental emotions and types, and forsaking altogether his almost *meticulous* analysis of motive and temperament.—W. G.

The most *meticulous* critic will not easily catch her tripping.—T. (We recommend to this reviewer a more meticulous use of the dictionary)

It is Victor Hugo's people, the motives on which they act, the means they take to carry out their objects, their relations to one another, that strike us as so *monumentally* droll.—T.

Nothing definite has been decided upon as to the exact date of the visits, the *venue* of the visits, the . . .—T.

Perhaps both Milton and Beethoven would live in our memories as writers of idylls, had not a *brusque* infirmity dreadfully shut them off from their fellow men.—T.

#### 2. Circumlocution—unctuous, oracular, or facetious.

That life was brought to a close in November 1567, at an age, probably, not far from *the one fixed by the sacred writer as the term of human existence*.—PRESCOTT. \*

The question of an extension of the Zemstvos to the south-west provinces is believed to be under consideration. It is understood that the visit of General Kleigels to St. Petersburg is *not unconnected therewith*.—T.

'I could say more if I thought fit'. So the next:

The lengthy interviews between his Majesty the King and the Dewan . . . are *not wholly unconnected* with this matter.—*W. G.*

There were few events that left any deep traces in France in the minds of the votaries of the *inflated sphere* [football].—*T.*

Germany has . . . yet another card in her hand, a card of the kind which is useful to players when in doubt.—*T.*

It has not only the coat and waistcoat displayed, but also that other article of male dress from which one translation of the Bible has received the unbecoming name whereby it is commonly known.—*SOUTHEY.*

She skated extremely badly, but with an enjoyment that was almost pathetic, in consideration of the persistence of 'frequent fall'.—*E. F. BENSON.*

3. The Carlylese superlative. Almost any page of Milton's prose will show whence Carlyle had this; but it is most offensive in ordinary modern writing.

Our enveloping movements since some days prove successful, and fiercest battle is now proceeding.—*T.*

In which, too, so many *noblest* men have . . . both made and been what will be venerated to all time.—*CARLYLE.*

Struggling with objects which, though it cannot master them, are essentially of *richest* significance.—*CARLYLE.*

The request was urged with every kind suggestion, and every assurance of aid and comfort, by *friendliest* parties in Manchester.—*EMERSON.*

In *Darkest* Africa.—*STANLEY.*

Deios furnishes, not only *quaintest* tripods . . .—*L. M. MITCHELL.*

The scene represents in *crudest* forms the combat of gods and giants, a subject which should attain long afterwards *fullest* expression in the powerful frieze of the Great Altar at Pergamon.—*L. M. MITCHELL.*

A world of *highest* and *noblest* thought.—*L. M. MITCHELL.*

From *earliest* times such competitive games had been celebrated.—*L. M. MITCHELL.*

When *fullest*, *freest* forms had not yet been developed.—*L. M. MITCHELL.*

4. 'A' placed between the adjective and its noun.

This order is a foolish affectation, except in a few (chiefly exclamatory) types; such as *Many a youth*, *What a lie!*, *How dreadful a fate!*, *So lame an excuse*. In the following, read *quite a sufficient*, *a more valuable*, *a more glorious*, *a more serviceable*, *no different position*, *a greater or less degree*.

Which was *quite sufficient* an indication of coming events.—*T.*

Can any one choose *more glorious an exit* than to die fighting for one's own country?—*T.*

Of sympathy, of . . . Mr. Baring has a full measure, which, in his case, is *more valuable an asset* than familiarity with military textbooks.—*T.*

To make Oxford *more serviceable a part* of our educational system.—*W. G.*

In *no different a position* from that of any other Civil Servant.—*W. G.*

Finding place in *more or less a degree* in all churches.—*D. T.*

### 5. The determined picturesque.

Across the street blank shutters flung back the gaslight in cold smears.—*KIPLING.*

The outflung white water at the foot of a homeward-bound Chinaman not a hundred yards away, and her shadow-slashed rope-purpled sails bulging sideways like insolent cheeks.—*KIPLING.*

An under-carry of grey woolly spindrift of a slaty colour flung itself noiselessly in the opposite direction, a little above the tree tops.—*CROCKETT.*

Then for a space the ground was more clayey, and a carpet of green water-weeds were combed and waved by the woven ropes of water.—*E. F. BENSON.*

At some distance off, in Winchester probably, which pricked the blue haze of heat with dim spires, a church bell came muffled and languid.—*E. F. BENSON.*

A carriage drive lay in long curves like a flicked whip lash, surmounting terrace after terrace set with nugatory nudities.—*E. F. BENSON.*

### 6. Fine frenzy.

Who, indeed, can sleep even in the smallest hours of the morning, when the ship's decks swarm with those who have rushed on deck at the dawn's breaking as the word runs along that the winking lights along the looming spit that skirts the waters tells that the sea's edge indolently swishes against the far-famed Palisadoes!—*W. G.*

It is not very easy to follow; but they have just sighted land, evidently, *tells* being a misprint for *tell*. The repetitions *deck* and *along* are slips such as occur in exalted moments. The word, too, might be in a more convenient form for running along through a swarm of excited passengers; but, when all is said and done, the writer is well entitled to his 'note of admiration'—a sigh of achievement, as it were—in place of question-mark.

## 7. Metrical prose.

The novice who is conscious of a weakness for the high-flown and the inflated should watch narrowly for metrical snatches in his prose; they are a sure sign that the fit is on him.

Oh, moralists, who treat of happiness / and self-respect, innate in every sphere / of life, and shedding light on every grain / of dust in God's highway, so smooth below / your carriage-wheels, so rough beneath the tread / of naked feet, bethink yourselves / in looking on the swift descent / of men who *have* lived in their own esteem, / that there are scores of thousands breathing now, / and breathing thick with painful toil, who in / that high respect have never lived at all, / nor had a chance of life! Go ye, who rest / so placidly upon the sacred Bard / who had been young, and when he strung his harp / was old, . . . / go, Teachers of content and honest pride, / into the mine, the mill, the forge, / the squalid depths of deepest ignorance, / and uttermost abyss of man's neglect, / and say can any hopeful plant spring up / in air so foul that it extinguishes / the soul's bright torch as fast as it is kindled!—DICKENS.

But now,—now I have resolved to stand alone,—/ fighting my battle as a man should fight, / seeking for neither help nor sympathy, / and trusting not in self . . .—CORELLI.

Their deeds of derring-do as lightly banished / as their most blackest infamies,—the gossip-tales of all they did, / their loves, their little jealousies, / their piques and wrangles and their crimes, / . . .—W. G.

Can I then trust the evidence of sense? / And art thou really to my wish restored? / Never, oh never, did thy beauty shine / with such bewitching grace, as that which now / confounds and captivates my view! / . . . Where hast thou lived? where borrowed this perfection? / . . . Oh! I am all amazement, joy and fear! / Thou wilt not leave me! No! we must not part / again. By this warm kiss! a thousand times / more sweet than all the fragrance of the East! / we never more will part. O! this is rapture! / ecstasy! and what no language will explain!—SMOLLETT.

8. Formal antithesis or parallel. This particular form of artificiality is perhaps too much out of fashion to be dangerous at present. Our examples are from Macaulay:—

He had neither the qualities which make dulness respectable, nor the qualities which make libertinism attractive.

The first two kings of the House of Hanover had neither those hereditary rights which have often supplied the place of merit, nor those personal qualities which have often supplied the defect of title.

But he was indolent and dissolute, and had early impaired a fine estate with the dice-box, and a fine constitution with the bottle.

9. Intrusive smartness—a form of self-consciousness.

Round her lay piles of press notices, which stripped the American variety of the English language bare of epithets.—E. F. BENSON.

Income-tax payers are always treated to the fine words which butter no parsnips, and are always assured that it is really a danger to the State to go on skinning them in time of peace to such an extent as to leave little integument to remove in time of war.—T.

The climbing of the thermometer into the nineties is *an acrobatic feat which concerns the thermometer only*, and at the junction of Sixth Avenue and Broadway there was no slackening in the tides of the affairs of men.—E. F. BENSON.

10. *Somewhat*.

Indulgence in qualifying adverbs, as *perhaps, possibly, probably, rather, a little, somewhat*, amounts with English journalists to a disease; the intemperate orgy of moderation is renewed every morning. As *somewhat* is rapidly swallowing up the rest, we shall almost confine our attention to it.

The illogical:

Thrills which gave him *rather a unique* pleasure.—HUTTON.

Russian despatches are *somewhat inconsistent*, one of them stating that there is no change in the position of the armies, while another says that the Japanese advance continues.—T.

Being faint with hunger I was *somewhat in a listless condition* bordering on stupor.—CORELLI.

In the light of these, it would be hard to say what full inconsistency and listlessness may be.

Surely a *somewhat infinitesimal* point.—T.

Thirdly, it is *rather agonizing* at times to the philologist.—T.

In various evidently 'well-informed' journals the *somewhat amazing* proposition is set up that . . .—T.

To the accompaniment of a *somewhat agonizing* band.—T.

Many other properties, some of them *a little well worn*, suitable for the staging of a tale of mystery.—S.

Some of these would be defended as humorous under-statement. But if this hackneyed trick is an example of the national humour, we had better cease making reflections on German want of humour.

*Somewhat* shyly announcing a well-chosen phrase:—

Entirely worthy of his *somewhat acrobatic* diplomacy.—T.

Gaston engaged in a controversy . . . , which terminated by his *somewhat abruptly quitting his Alma Mater*.—BEACONSFIELD.

His country seat at Wotton, wherein Mr. Zabriskie has surely estated Rousseau *somewhat at the cost of one Mr. Davenport*.—S. R.

*Somewhat* conveying a sneer :—

It is *somewhat* strange that any one connected with this institution should be so unfamiliar with its regulations.—T.

But very few points of general interest have been elicited in any quarter by these *somewhat* academic reflections.—T.

This *somewhat* glowing advertisement of the new loan.—T.

• The genuine *somewhat*, merely tame, timid, undecided, conciliatory, or polite :—

I am certain that the clergy themselves only too gladly acquiesce in this somewhat illogical division of labour.—T.

• This, no doubt, is what Professor Ray Lankester is driving at in his somewhat intemperate onslaught.—T.

The *rather mysterious* visit of S. Tittoni, the Italian Foreign Minister, to Germany.—T.

These are of *rather remarkable* promise ; the head shows an unusual power of realizing character under a purely ideal conception.—T.

The *rather finely* conceived statuette . . . by Mr. Oliver Wheatley.—T.

It is somewhat the fashion to say that in these days . . . —T.

The statement made by the writer is somewhat open to doubt.—T.

It would be valuable if he would somewhat expand his ideas.—T.

Sir,—I have been somewhat interested in the recent correspondence in your columns.—T.

He is a somewhat rash man who summarily dismisses the matter.—T.

Sir Francis Bertie, whose dislike of unnecessary publicity is somewhat pronounced.—T.

Surely this is *rather* a different thing ? Perhaps the words used were *somewhat* open to misconstruction ; but that Colonel Pollock should . . . seems *rather* an absurd notion. I am, Sir, . . . —S.

It is not too much to say that any one who hopes to write well had better begin by abjuring *somewhat* altogether. A not less dissuasive collection might easily be made of *distinctly* ; it gives the patronizing interest, as *somewhat* gives the contemptuous indifference, with which a superior person is to be conceived surveying life ; and context too often reveals that the superiority is imaginary.



11. *If and when, unless and until.*

This formula has enjoyed more popularity than it deserves; many writers seem to have persuaded themselves that neither *if* nor *when* is any longer capable of facing its responsibilities without the other word to keep it in countenance.

No doubt it will accept the experimental proof here alleged, [if and] when it is repeated under conditions . . . —*T.*

The latter will include twelve army corps, six rifle brigades, . . . units which, [if and] when complete, will more than provide . . . —*T.*

[Unless and] until we pound hardest we shall never beat the Boers. —*S.*

It is only [if, and] when, our respective possessions become conterminous with those of great military states on land that we each . . . —*T.*

No prudent seaman would undertake an invasion [unless or] until he had first disposed of the force preparing . . . to impeach him. —*T.*

Its leaders decline to take office unless [and until] the 90 or 100 German words of command used . . . are replaced . . . —*T.*

[If and] when employment is abundant . . . —*W. G.*

It means . . . the final committal of one of the two great parties to a return to Protection, [if and] when it has the opportunity. —*W. G.*

The work will gain much if [and when] she plays faster. —*W. G.*

The only context that justifies *if and when* is very rare; it must be desired (1) expressly to avoid implying that the condition will be realized, and therefore not to use *when* alone in its common hypothetical sense, and (2) at the same time to suggest emphatically that the consequence will follow immediately, and not after delay, upon the condition's being realized. The following sentence may perhaps have a right on this ground to its *if and when*:—

. . . it is Mr. Balfour's intention, if and when he puts the small duties on foreign imports which he has indicated in various speeches, to balance them by an excise. —*W. G.*

A fair test of whether a context is of this nature is to try whether, if *and when* is omitted, the insertion of such an adverb as *immediately* (after *balance them* in our example) becomes necessary or desirable. It should be added that in negative contexts (*unless and until, only if and when*) requirement (1) can never be present, and that therefore *when, until*, should always be used alone.

## CHAPTER IV

### EUPHONY

THE very name of euphony is so suggestive of literary priggishness in its least intelligent and most unctuous form that we should have been glad to find any other title for this chapter. The reader will here be offered no scheme for the musical juxtaposition or alternation of dental and guttural, no recipe for the manufacture of 'beautiful English'. Our treatment will, as usual, be negative. We shall briefly illustrate one or two obvious points of accentuation, and balance, and shall add, in the later sections, a few examples of the everyday slips that are just worth mentioning because they easily escape a hurried writer's notice. 'Take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves' will not quite do as motto for a euphony chapter ; but it comes very near the truth ; how near may partly be seen from the distinctions that naturally present themselves in such matters as recurrent *-ly* and sequence of the conjunction *that*.

Vague principles of euphony are too often elevated into universal laws. No better example could be cited than the rule, already alluded to in former chapters, that a sentence or clause must not end with a preposition. It is desirable to be clear on this point, because a rule about prepositions affects—on a moderate calculation—every tenth sentence we write or speak. The forbidden order of words is sometimes ugly, and when it is ugly it must be changed ; but that is all that can reasonably be said. Some writers perhaps accept the universal rule in the belief that it is based on long-standing usage : a very slight inquiry into our literature, from Chaucer to the present day, would show that idea to be groundless ; and without any inquiry at all every one knows how to put into English *About what are*

*you talking ? or That depends on with what you cut it. Think of all I have gone through* is good English, literary and colloquial : *Think of all through which I have gone* is double Dutch. It would be well for many authors if they had never heard this rule ; they would have saved themselves an immense expenditure of worse than useless labour ; compared to the monotony and stiffness it has to answer for, mere casual slips in grammar, such as we quote below, are small evils.

Lastly may be mentioned a principle *upon which Clausewitz insisted* with all his strength, and could never sufficiently impress upon his royal scholar.—*T.* (which . . . insisted upon)

The promised land *for which he was to prepare*, but scarcely to enter.—*LORD ROSEBURY.* (which he was to prepare for)

All this when Madame saw, *and of which when she took note*, her sole observation was :—*. . . —C. BRONTË.* (saw and took note of)

So he ordered Ahmed Feizi Pasha to get together as large a number of Circassian and Albanian regiments *upon whom he could rely*, recapture Sanaa and . . .—*O.* (as he could rely upon)

### SENTENCE ACCENT

It is only necessary to read aloud any one of the sentences quoted below, to perceive at once that there is something wrong with its accentuation. And, although the fault may appear to be exclusively one of sound, it is always in fact a fault of sense : unnatural accentuation is only the outward sign of an unnatural combination of thought. Nine readers out of ten would detect in a moment, without reading aloud, the ill-judged structure in our first example : the writer has tried to do two incompatible things at the same time, to describe in some detail the appearance of his characters, and to begin a conversation ; the result is that any one reading the sentence aloud is compelled to maintain, through several lines of new and essential information, the tone that is appropriate only to what is treated as a matter of course.

The accentuation of each clause or principal member of a sentence is primarily fixed by its relation to the other members : when the internal claims of its own component parts clash with

this fixed accentuation—when, for instance, what should be read with a uniformly declining accentuation requires for its own internal purposes a marked rise and fall of accent—reconstruction is necessary to avoid a badly balanced sentence. The passage from Peacock will illustrate this : after *pupils*, and still more after *counter-point*, the accentuation should steadily decline to the end of the passage ; but, conflicting with this requirement, we have the exorbitant claims of a complete anecdote, containing within itself an elaborately accented speech. To represent the anecdote as an insignificant appendage to *pupils* was a fault of sense ; it is revealed to the few who would not have perceived it by the impossibility of reading the passage naturally.

‘ Are Japanese Aprils always as lovely as this ? ’ asked the man in the light tweed suit of two others in immaculate flannels with crimson sashes round their waists and puggarees folded in cunning plaits round their broad Terai hats.—SLADEN.

‘ Here we are ’, he said presently, after they had turned off the main road for a while and rattled along a lane between high banks topped with English shrubs, and looking for all the world like an ontskirt of Tunbridge Wells.—SLADEN.

I doubt if Haydn would have passed as a composer before a committee of lords like one of his own pupils, who insisted on demonstrating to him that he was continually sinning against the rules of counterpoint ; on which Haydn said to him, ‘ I thought I was to teach you, but it seems you are to teach me, and I do not want a preceptor,’ and thereon he wished his lordship a good morning.—PEACOCK.

The calamity touches no one against whom the forces of disorder had even such complaint as satisfies the strange code of popular justice now deluging the Tsar’s dominions with blood.—O.

This might have stood : ‘ ... had even the slightest complaint.’ But the writer anticipates the obvious protest (Ah, you cannot expect the Russians to be particular just now) by expanding *the slightest* into *such ... as ...* The fault lies not in the length of his expansion but in the choice of the word *satisfies*, which converts what should have been a mere definition (read *such ... as is demanded by*) into an expression of the writer’s own sentiment—that they are too easily satisfied. It was open

to him to keep this reflection as such ; an apposition would have been sufficient break : ' . . . the slightest complaint, such complaint even as satisfies . . . '

How doth the earth terrifie and oppress us with terrible earthquakes, which are most frequent in China, Japan, and those eastern climes, swallowing up sometimes six cities at once !—BURTON.

An attempt to combine an exclamation, which is essentially an appeal to the reader's judgement on circumstances already familiar to him, with what is frankly new information. *Such as are most frequent* would have done ; or again *the terrible earthquakes so frequent*, because *so frequent* means ' that you, the reader, have observed to be frequent '.

She wondered at having drifted into the neighbourhood of a person resembling in her repellent formal chill virtuousness a windy belfry tower, down among those districts of suburban London or appalling provincial towns passed now and then with a shudder, where the funereal square bricks-up the church, that Arctic hen-mother sits on the square, and the moving dead are summoned to their round of penitential exercise by a monosyllabic tribulation-bell.—MEREDITH.

The verb *wonder* (as a matter of idiom) presupposes the reader's familiarity with the circumstance wondered at ; it will not do the double work of announcing both the wonder and the thing wondered at. ' I wondered at Smith's being there ' implies that my hearer knew that Smith was there ; if he did not, I should say ' I was surprised to find . . . '. To read a sentence of minute and striking description with the declining accentuation that necessarily follows the verb *wondered* is impossible.

Of the many possible violations of sentence accent, one—common in inferior writers—is illustrated in the next section.

#### CAUSAL *AS* CLAUSES

There are two admissible kinds of causal *as* clause—the pure and the mixed. The pure clause assigns as a cause some fact that is already known to the reader and is sure to occur to him in the connexion : the mixed assigns as a cause what is not necessarily known to the reader or present

in his mind ; it has the double function of conveying a new fact, and indicating its relation to the main sentence. Context will usually decide whether an *as* clause is pure or mixed ; in the following examples, it is clear from the nature of the two clauses that the first is pure, the second mixed :—

I have an edition with German notes ; but that is of no use, as you do not read German.

I caught the train, but afterwards wished I had not, as I presently discovered to my horror that my luggage was left behind.

The second of these is readable only if we slur the *as* to such an extent as practically to acknowledge that it ought not to be there. The reason is that, although a pure clause may stand at any point in the sentence, a mixed one must always precede the main statement. The pure clause, having only the subordinate function normally indicated by *as*, is subordinate in sense as well as in grammar ; and the declining accentuation with which it is accordingly pronounced will not be interfered with wherever we may place it. But the mixed clause has another function, that of conveying a new fact, for which *as* does not prepare us, and which entitles it to an accentuation as full and as varied as that of the main statement. To neutralize the subordinating effect of *as*, and secure the proper accentuation, we must place the clause at the beginning ; where this is not practicable, *as* should be removed, and a colon or semi-colon used instead of a comma. Persistent usage tends of course to remove this objection by weakening the subordinating power of conjunctions : *because*, *while*, *whereas*, *since*, can be used where *as* still betrays a careless or illiterate writer.

I myself saw in the estate office of a large landed proprietor a procession of peasant women begging for assistance, as owing to the departure of the bread-winners the families were literally starving.—*T.*

Remove *as*, and use a heavier stop. So in the next :

Very true, Jasper ; but you really ought to learn to read, as, by so doing, you might learn your duty towards yourselves.—BORROW.

Imagine the persistent patience required, as the machine had to be turned by hand.—C. R. GIBSON.

There was a barber and hairdresser, who had been at Paris, and talked French with a cockney accent, the French sounding all the better, as no accent is so melodious as the Cockney.—BORROW.

Use *for*; Borrow's assertion, in particular, requires all the support that vigorous accentuation can lend.

Pure clauses, being from their nature more or less otiose, belong rather to the spoken than to the written language. It follows that a good writer will seldom have a causal *as* clause of any kind at the end of a sentence.

When the cause, not the effect, is obviously the whole point of the sentence, *because*, not *as*, should be used; the following is impossible English:

I make these remarks as quick shooting at short ranges has lately been so strongly recommended.—T.

#### WENS AND HYPERTROPHIED MEMBERS

No sentence is to be condemned for mere length; a skilful writer can fill a page with one and not tire his reader, though a succession of long sentences without the relief of short ones interspersed is almost sure to be forbidding. But one part of a sentence must not be allowed to develop unnatural proportions, nor a half parenthetical insertion to separate too widely the essential parts.

##### 1. Disproportionate insertions.

Some simple eloquence distinctly heard, though only uttered in her eyes, unconscious that he read them, as, 'By the death-beds I have tended, by the childhood I have suffered, by our meeting in this dreary house at midnight, by the cry wrung from me in the anguish of my heart, O father, turn to me and seek a refuge in my love before it is too late!' may have arrested them.—DICKENS.

A perpetual consequent warfare of her spirit and the nature subject to the thousand sensational hypocrisies invoked for concealment of its reviled brutish baseness, held the woman suspended from her emotions.—MEREDITH.

Yesterday, before Dudley Sowerby's visit, Nataly would have been stirred where the tears which we shed for happiness or repress at a flattery dwell when seeing her friend Mrs. John Cormyn enter . . .—MEREDITH.

Behind, round the windows of the lower story, clusters of clematis, like

large purple sponges, blossomed, miraculously fed through their thin, dry stalks.—E. F. BENSON.

It is a striking exhibition of the power which the groups, hostile in different degrees to a democratic republic, have of Parliamentary combination.—S.

*Blossomed, have*, are overbalanced by their subjects, the words that follow having no efficacy as make-weights.

A vast amount of Europe's wealth was locked up in this sterile (I speak economically) property.—J. McCABE.

*This (economically speaking) sterile property.* This is worth patching, because there is point in the insertion. Not so the next:

The West-end never looks gayer than it does on the real opening day—which will be Monday—of these events provided the weather be fine.—*N. T.*

The important fact which those engaged in organizing a suitable system of higher education for the men who are to become leaders of business should not lose sight of is that while . . .—O.

2. Decapitable sentences, each joint of which gives the reader hopes of a full stop.

Philipson had often heard that the seat of a free count, or chief of the Secret Tribunal, was secretly instituted even on the left bank of the Rhine, / and that it maintained itself even in Alsace, / with the usual tenacity of those secret societies, / though Duke Charles of Burgundy had expressed a desire to discover and discourage its influence so far as possible, [sic] / without exposing himself to danger from the thousands of poniards which that mysterious tribunal could put in activity against his own life /—an awful means of defence, / which for a long time rendered it extremely hazardous for the sovereigns of Germany, and even the emperors themselves, to put down by authority those singular associations.—SCOTT.

It was only after the weight of evidence against the economic success of the endeavour became overwhelming that our firm withdrew its support /, and in conjunction with almost the entire British population of the country concentrated its efforts on endeavouring to obtain permission to increase the coloured unskilled labour supply of the mines / so as to be in a position to extend mining operations /, and thus assist towards re-establishing the prosperity of the country /, while at the same time attracting a number of skilled British artisans / who would receive not merely the bare living wage of the white unskilled labourer, but a wage sufficient to enable these artisans to bring their families to the country / and to make their permanent home there.—W. G.



Here may still be seen by the watchful eye the Louisiana heron and smaller egret, all that rapacious plume-hunters have left of their race, tripping like timid fairies in and out the leafy screen / that hides the rank jungle of sawgrass and the grisly swamp where dwells the alligator /, which lies basking, its nostrils just level with the dirty water of its bath, or burrows swiftly in the soft earth to evade the pursuit of those who seek to dislodge it with rope and axe / that they may sell its hide to make souvenirs for the tourists / who, at the approach of summer, hie them north or east with grateful memories of that fruitful land.—A. G. AFLALC.

Running after milkmaids is by no means an ungenteel rural diversion ; but let any one ask some respectable casuist (the Bishop of London, for instance), whether Lavengro was not far better employed, when in the country, at tinkering and smithery than he would have been in running after all the milkmaids in Cheshire /, though tinkering is in general considered a very ungenteel employment /, and smithery little better /, notwithstanding that an Orcadian poet, who wrote in Norse about 800 years ago, reckons the latter among nine noble arts which he possessed /, naming it along with playing at chess, on the harp, and ravelling runes /, or as the original has it, 'treading runes' /—that is, compressing them into small compass by mingling one letter with another /, even as the Turkish calligraphists ravel the Arabic letters /, more especially those who write talismans.—BORROW.

### CARELESS REPETITION

Repetition of a word or phrase may be required for emphasis or clearness : in the following examples it has no such justification, and proves only that the writer did not read over what he had written.

... a man ... who directly *impresses* one with the *impression* . . .—T.

For most of *them* get rid of *them* more or less completely.—H. SWEET.

The most important distinction between dialogue on the one hand and *purely* descriptive and narrative pieces on the other hand is a *purely* grammatical one.—H. SWEET.

That inclusion of *adherents* would be *adhered* to.—T.

The *remainder remaining* loyal, fierce fighting commenced.—S.

Every subordinate shortcoming, every incidental defect, will be *pardoned*. 'Save us' is the cry of the moment ; and, in the confident hope of safety, any deficiency will be overlooked, and any frailty *pardoned*.—BAGEHOT.

It can do so, in all reasonable probability, *provided* its militia character is maintained. But in any case it will *provide* us at home with the second line army of our needs.—T.

Artillery firing *extends* along the whole front, *extending* for eighty miles.—*T.*

The fleet passed the port *on its way* through the Straits *on the way* to the China Sea.—*T.*

Much of his popularity he owed, we believe, to *that* very timidity *which* his friends lamented. *That* timidity often prevented him from exhibiting his talents to the best advantage. But it propitiated Nemesis. It averted *that* envy *which* would otherwise have been excited . . .—MACAULAY.

At the same time it was largely *owing* to his careful training that so many great Etonian cricketers *owed* their success.—*T.*

### REPEATED PREPOSITIONS

The founders *of* the study *of* the origin *of* human culture.—MORLEY.

The necessity *of* the modification *of* the system *of* administration.—*T.*

Hostile to the justice *of* the principle *of* the taxing *of* those values which . . .—LORD ROSEBERY.

The observation *of* the facts *of* the geological succession *of* the forms *of* life.—HUXLEY.

One uniform note *of* cordial recognition *of* the complete success *of* the experiment.—*T.*

The appreciation *of* the House *of* the benefits derived *by* the encouragement afforded *by* the Government to the operations *of* . . .—*T.*

A characteristic piece *of* journalese.

The study *of* the perfectly human theme *of* the affection *of* a man *of* middle age.—*T.*

His conviction *of* the impossibility *of* the proposal either *of* the creation *of* elective financial boards . . .—*D. E.*

Representative *of* the mind *of* the age *of* literature.—RUSKIN.

Indignation *against* the worst offenders *against* . . .—*T.*

Taken up *with* warfare *with* an enemy . . .—FREEMAN.

Called *upon* to decide *upon* the reduction . . .—*T.*

The writers have seized *upon* the Prince's words *upon* which to hang the text *of* much rebuking *for* the Gaekwar *for* his perverse blindness.—*D. T.*

Out *of* the frying-pan (*of* much rebuking *of*) into the fire.

### SEQUENCE OF RELATIVES

• Still no word *of* enlightenment had come *which* should pierce the thick clouds *of* doubt *which* hid the face *of* the future.—E. F. BENSON.

• The ideal *of* a general alphabet . . . is one *which* gives a basis *which* is generally acceptable.—H. SWLET.

He enjoyed a lucrative practice, *which* enabled him to maintain and educate a family with all the advantages *which* money can give in this country.—TROLLOPE.

The main thread of the book, *which* is a daring assault upon that serious kind of pedantry *which* utters itself in . . .—L. STEPHEN.

*That money can give ; the . . . pedantry that.*

Practical reasons *which* combine to commend this architectural solution of a problem *which* so many of us dread . . .—T.

The teachers, *who* took care that the weaker, *who* might otherwise be driven to the wall, had . . . their fair share.—T.

Let the heads and rulers of free peoples tell this truth to a Tsar *who*, seeks to dominate a people *who* will not and cannot . . .—T.

He made a speech . . . *which* contained a passage on the conditions of modern diplomacy *which* attracted some attention.—T.

There is no objection to the recurrence when the relatives are parallel ; and the same is true of conjunctions.

I say *that* there is a real danger *that* we may run to the other extreme.—HUXLEY.

It is clear . . . *that* the opinion was *that* it is not incompatible.—NANSEN.

I find *that* the view *that* Japan has now a splendid opportunity . . .—T.

An official telegram states *that* General Nogi reports *that* . . .—T.

The conviction *that* the Tsar must realize *that* the prestige of Russia is at stake.—T.

He was so carried away by his discovery *that* he ventured on the assertion *that* the similarity between the two languages was so great *that* an educated German could understand whole strophes of Persian poetry.—H. SWEET.

I may fairly claim to have no personal interest in defending the council, *although* I believe, *though* I am not certain, that . . .—T.

## JINGLES

To read his tales is a baptism of optimism.—T.

Sensation is the direct effect of the mode of motion of the sensorium.—HUXLEY.

No periodical general physical catastrophes.—HUXLEY.

It is contended, indeed, that these preparations are intended . . .—T.

It is intended to extend the system to this country.—T.

M. Sphakianakis conducted protracted negotiations.—T.

He served his apprenticeship to statesmanship.—BRUCE.

I awaited a belated train.—R. G. WHITE.

... adjourned the discussion of the question of *delation*. . . —T.

In this house of poverty and dignity, of past grandeur and present simplicity, the brothers lived together in unity.—H. CAINE.

Their *invalidity* was caused by a *technicality*.—T.

... had for consolation the expansion of its dominion.—S.

The essential foundation of all the organization needed for the promotion of education.—HUXLEY.

The projects of M. Witte relative to the regulation of the relations between capital and labour.—T.

The remaining instances are of consecutive adverbs in *-ly*.

Parallel adverbs, qualifying the same word simultaneously, do not result in a jingle; but in all our instances the two adverbs either qualify different words, or qualify the same word at different times. Thus, in the Huxley sentence, *unquestionably* either qualifies *is*, or qualifies *true* only after *largely* has qualified it: it is not the (universal) truth, but the partial truth, of the proposition that is unquestionable.

When the traffic in our streets becomes entirely mechanically propelled.—T.

He lived practically exclusively on milk.—E. F. BENSON.

Critics would probably decidedly disagree.—HUTTON.

The children are functionally mentally defective.—T.

What is practically wholly and entirely the British commerce.—T.

... who answered, usually monosyllabically, . . . —E. F. BENSON.

The policy of England is, as formerly, entirely friendly.—T.

Spent possibly unwisely, probably illegally, and certainly hastily.—T.

The deer are necessarily closely confined to definite areas.—T.

We find Hobbes's view . . . tolerably effectively combated.—MORLEY.

Great mental endowments do not, unhappily, necessarily involve a passion for obscurity.—H. G. WELLS.

The proposition of Descartes is unquestionably largely true.—HUXLEY.

## CHAPTER V

### MEANING

WE group together here a few common slips resulting from muddle-headedness or carelessness. When we find a writer tripping ludicrously where he wishes to be impressive, saying just the opposite of what he means to say, or showing by a misplaced *but* that he is in too much of a hurry to be able to follow his own argument, our confidence is shaken; and, naturally, those writers lose most by such mishaps who can least afford to lose. The novice, detected in blunders of this kind, commonly has recourse to the soothing maxim that 'of all kinds of criticism, verbal criticism is the lowest'; that is, an excellent line to take in the circumstances; he should, however, first assure himself that his wares are irresistible on other and higher than verbal grounds; if doubt seems possible on that point, let him rank the control of unruly negatives and the rational use of conjunctions among 'little things to know, not little things not to know'.

### CONFUSION WITH NEGATIVES

This is extraordinarily common. The instances are arranged in order of obviousness.

The headquarters of the modern Babi propaganda, the far-reaching effects of which it is probably difficult to underestimate.—*S.*

No rival is *too* small to be overlooked, no device is *too* infamous *not* to be practised, if it will more firmly rivet the grasp of the Standard monopoly.—*N. R.*

But when was the pride of woman too lofty to overlook the passionate devotion of a lover, however inferior in degree?—*SCOTT.*

Not a whit undeterred by the disaster which overtook them at Cavendish-square last week . . . the suffragettes again made themselves prominent.—*D. M.*

I am not sure that physiology, such as it was down to the time of Harvey, might as well not have existed.—*HUXLEY.*

Is it impossible to imagine that, in consequence of the growing friendship between the two great peoples on both sides of the Channel, an agreement might not one day be realized between the four Powers?—*T.*

I do not of course deny that in this, as in all moral principles, there may not be found . . . cases which may amuse a casuist.—*L. STEPHEN.*

Is it quite inconceivable that if the smitten had always turned the other cheek the smiters would not long since have become so ashamed that their practice would have ceased?—*D. T.*

I do not think it is possible that the traditions and doctrines of these two institutions should not fail to create rival . . . schools.—*T.*

Any man . . . denying the doctrine of the Trinity or of the Divinity of Christ, or that the books of Scripture are not the 'Word of God', or . . . , shall suffer the pain of death'.—*J. R. GREEN.*

But it would not be at all surprising if, by attempting too much, . . . Mr. Sichel has not to some extent defeated his own object.—*S.*

No one scarcely really believes.—*D. T.*

Let them agree to differ; for who knows but what agreeing to differ may not be a form of agreement . . . ?—*STEVENSON.*

Lastly, how can Mr. Balfour tell but that two years hence he may not be too tired of official life to begin any new conflict?—*F. GREENWOOD.*

They could hardly fail to regard it as anything but an expression of want of confidence in our whole South-African policy.—*T.*

My friend Mr. Boucherby could never see any difference between leaving the Coketown 'hands' exactly as they were and requiring them to be fed with turtle soup and venison out of gold spoons.—*DICKENS.*

*Not leaving.*

It appears to me . . . that there is a very great distinction between a craven truckling to foreign nations and adopting the attitude of the proverbial Irishman at a fair, who goes about asking if anybody would like to tread on the tail of his coat.—*W. G.*

Of course there is. For *adopting* read *avoiding* or *abstaining from*.

But it is one thing to establish these conditions [the Chinese Ordinance], and another to remove them suddenly.—*W. G.*

What economy of life and money would not have been spared the empire of the Tsars had it not rendered war certain.—*T.* (*It is the empire.* The instance is not quoted for *not*, though that too is wrong, but for the confusion between loss and economy)

•The fact that a negative idea can often be either included in a word or kept separate from it leads to a special form of con-

fusion, the construction proper to the resolved form being used with the compound and *vice versa*.

My feelings, Sir, are moderately unspeakable, and that is a fact.—(American.) (not moderately speakable: *moderately* belongs only to half of *unspeakable*)

... who did not aim, like the Presbyterians, at a change in Church government, but rejected the notion of a national Church at all.—J. R. GREEN. (*Reject* is equivalent to *will not have*. I reject altogether: I will not have at all)

Just as you like, Sir; it is immaterial to me at all.—(Overheard)

I confess myself altogether unable to formulate such a principle, much less to prove it.—BALFOUR. (*Less* does not suit *unable*, but *able*; but the usage of *much less* and *much more* is hopelessly chaotic)

War between these two great nations would be an inexplicable impossibility.—CHOATE. (*Inexplicable* does not qualify the whole of *impossibility*; to make sense we must divide *impossibility* into *impossible event*, and take *inexplicable* only with *event*)

And the cry has this justification,—that no age can see itself in a proper perspective, and is therefore incapable of giving its virtues and vices their relative places.—S. (*No age* is equivalent to *not any age*, and out of this we have to take *any age* as subject to the last sentence; this is a common, but untidy and blameworthy device; read *or is capable*)

## DOUBLE EMPHASIS

Attempts at packing double emphasis into a single sentence are apt to result in real weakening.

No government ever plunged *more* rapidly into a *deeper* quagmire.—O. (From the writer's evident wish to state the matter strongly, we infer that several Governments have plunged more rapidly into as deep quagmires, and as rapidly into deeper ones)

Mr. Justice Neville . . . will now have the very rare experience of joining on the Bench a colleague whom he defeated on the polls *just fourteen years ago*.—W. G. (The *experience*, with exact time-interval, is probably unique, like any individual thumb-print; that does not make the *coincidence* of the two meetings more remarkable; and it is the coincidence that we are to admire)

Nothing has brought out more strongly than motor-driving the overbearing, selfish nature of too many motor-drivers and their utter want of consideration for their fellow men.—LORD WEMYSS. (The attempt to kill drivers and driving with one stone leaves both very slightly wounded,

For what should show up the drivers more than the driving? and whom should the driving show up more than the drivers?)<sup>p</sup>

The commonest form of this is due to conscientious but mistaken zeal for correctness, which prefers, for instance, *without oppressing or without plundering* to *without oppressing or plundering*. The first form excludes only one of the offences, and is therefore, though probably meant to be twice as emphatic, actually much weaker than the second, which excludes both. With *and* instead of *or*, it is another matter.

A gun constructed on the wire system can still be utilized effectively without the destruction of the weapon or without dangerous effects, even with its inner tube split.—*T.*

The Union must be maintained without pandering to such prejudices on the one hand, *or without* giving way on the other to . . .—*S.*

He inhibited him . . . from seeking a divorce in his own English Courts, *or from* contracting a new marriage.—*J. R. GREEN.*

But what no undergraduate *or no* professor in the art of writing verse, however skilful or accomplished, could achieve . . . is the spirit of poetry which breathes in this volume.—*W. G.*

### OVERLOADING

A single sentence is sometimes made to carry a double burden:

So unique a man as Sir George Lewis has, in truth, rarely been lost to this country.—*BAGEHOT.*

The meaning is not 'Men like Sir G. Lewis have seldom been lost', but 'Men like the late Sir G. Lewis have seldom been found'. But instead of *the late* a word was required that should express proper concern; *lost* is a short cut to 'men so unique as he whose loss we now deplore'.

There are but few men whose lives abound in such wild and romantic adventure, and, for the most part, crowned with success.—*PRESCOTT.*

The writer does not mean 'adventures so wild, so romantic, and so successful in the main'; that is shown by the qualifying parenthesis, which is obviously one of comment on the individual case. What he does mean ought to have been



given in two sentences: 'There are but few . . . adventure ; —'s, moreover, was for the most part crowned with success'.

The Sultan regrets that the distance and the short notice alone prevent him from coming in person.—*T.*

Then he wishes there were more obstacles. Read: 'The Sultan regrets that he cannot come in person; nothing but the distance and the short notice could prevent him'.

Imagine my surprise and delight to find that the exhibition of La Milo was the only redeeming feature in the long monstrous succession of ugliness and vulgarity.—*W. T. STEAD.*

We can imagine the surprise, but not the fiendish delight. Read 'at finding in the exhibition of La Milo a redeeming feature' or 'delight at the exhibition of La Milo, the only . . .'.

#### SUPERFLUOUS 'BUT' AND 'THOUGH'

Where there is a natural opposition between two sentences, adversative conjunctions may yet be made impossible by something in one of the sentences that does the work unaided. Thus if *in vain*, *only*, and *reserves* and *sole*, had not been used in the following sentences, *but* and *though* would have been right; as it is, they are wrong.

(The author dreams that he is a horse being ridden) *In vain* did I rear and kick, attempting to get rid of my foe; *but* the surgeon remained as saddle-fast as ever.—*BORROW.*

But the substance of the story is probably true, *though* Voltaire has *only* made a slip in a name.—*MORLEY.*

Germany, it appears, *reserves* for herself the *sole* privilege of creating triple alliances and 'purely defensive' combinations of that character, *but* when the interests of other Powers bring them together their action is reprobated as aggressive and menacing.—*T.*

The grant made in the Great Council was binding *only* on the barons and prelates who made it; *but* before the aids of the boroughs, the Church, or the Shires could reach the royal treasury, a separate negotiation had to be conducted.—*J. R. GREEN.*

#### TAUTOLOGY AND REDUNDANCY

His position—splendid, no doubt—of (lonely) isolation.—*T.*

It was borne out by the (surrounding) circumstances.—*T.*

Characteristics which distinguish them (apart) from one another.—*T.*

If Japan (again) regains her liberty of action.—*T.*

Miss Tox was (often) in the habit of assuring Mrs. Chick that . . . —  
DICKENS.

He had come up one morning, as was now (frequently) his wont.—  
TROLLOPE.

The counsellors of the Sultan (continue to) remain sceptical.—*T.*

Lending each other (mutual) support.—*T.*

However, I judged that they would soon (mutually) find each other  
out.—CROCKETT.

Notwithstanding which, (however,) poor Polly embraced them all round.  
—DICKENS.

If any real remedy is to be found, we must first diagnose the true  
nature of the disease ; (but) that, however, is not hard.—*T.*

The strong currents frequently shifted the mines, to the equal danger  
(both) of friend and foe.—*T.*

But to the ordinary English Protestant (both) Latitudinarian and High  
Churchmen were equally hateful.—J. R. GREEN.

Seriously, (and apart from jesting,) this is no light matter.—BAGEHOT.

To go back to your own country . . . with (the consciousness that you  
go back with) the sense of duty done.—LORD HALSBURY.

Togo had a capacity for taking pains, by which (said) quality genius is  
apt to triumph over early obstacles.—*T.*

A (joint) partnership between the two Powers.—*T.*

Sir—As a working man it appears to me that to the question 'Do we  
believe?' the only sensible position (there seems to be) is to frankly  
acknowledge our ignorance of what lies beyond.—*D. T.*

By reducing the National vote in the House of Commons they would  
not thereby get rid of obstruction.—*T.*

It is not a thousand years ago since municipalities in Scotland were  
by no means free from the suspicion of corruption.—LORD ROSEBERY.

Some substance equally as yielding.—*D. M.*

Mr. Morgan is credited with genuine personal enthusiasm in art matters,  
and also with a wide knowledge thereof. Also it may be noted, moreover,  
that the public . . . —*W. G.*

The reason of how it came that Nesta . . . —MEREDITH.

Some obligation is due to lessen the hardships.—*W. G.*

As one being able to give full consent . . . I am yours . . . —*D. T.*

But to where shall I look for some small ray of light?—*D. T.*

It is quite possible that if they do that it may be possible to amend it in  
certain particulars.—*W. G.*

Men and women who professed to call themselves Christians.—*D. T.*  
• (An echo of 'profess and call themselves Christians')

The correspondence that you have published *abundantly* throws out into *bold* relief the false position assumed . . .—*D. T.*

In the course of the *day, yesterday*, M. Rouvier was able . . .—*T.*

*Moreover, too*, do we not all feel . . .?—J. C. COLLINS.

### TRUISMS AND CONTRADICTIONS IN TERMS

With these we shall group certain other illogical expressions, due to a similar confusion of thought.

Praise which perhaps was scarcely meant to be taken *too* literally.—BAGEHOT.

*Too literally* is 'more literally than was meant'. We may safely affirm, without the cautious reservations *perhaps* and *scarcely*, that the praise was not meant to be taken more literally than it was meant to be taken. Of *it too*.

He found what was *almost quite* as interesting.—*T.*

Elegant, but *somewhat bordering on* the antique fashion.—SCOTT.

*Bordering on* means not 'like' but 'very like'; 'somewhat very like'.

A *very unique* child, thought I.—C. BRONTË.

A *somewhat unique* gathering of our great profession.—HALSBURY.

There are no degrees in uniqueness.

Steady, respectable labouring men—*one and all, with rare exceptions*, married.—*T.* (all without exception, with rare exceptions)

To *name* only a *few*, *take* Lord Rosebery, Lord Rendel, Lord . . . , . . . , and *many* others.—*T.*

*Take* means 'consider as instances'; we cannot do this unless we have their names; *take* must therefore mean 'let me name for your consideration'. Thus we get: 'To name only a *few*, let me name . . . and *many* others (whom I do not name)'.

More *led away* by a jingling antithesis of words than an accurate perception of ideas.—H. D. MACLEOD.

Jingling antithesis has more victims than the writer suspects.

Putting it to you as a deeply personal matter, don't you think it very desirable that ill-health of the hair demands and should receive as much attention . . . as ill-health of the body?—ADVT.

Eminently desirable, to the advertiser; attention being understood to mean hair-oil. Remove *it* very desirable; or,

if verbiage is required, read : ' . . think that ill-health demands . . . and that it is very desirable that it should receive '.

*Long before* the appointed hour for the commencement of the recital, standing room only fell to the lot of those who arrived *just previous* to Mr. K.'s appearance on the platform.—G. A.

The necessary inference—that Mr. K., the reciter, appeared on the platform long before the appointed hour—is probably not in accordance with the facts.

The weather this week has for the most part been of that quality which the month of March so *strikingly* characterizes in the *ordinary* course of events.—G. A.

He *forgot* that it was possible, that from a brief period of tumultuous disorder, there might issue a military despotism more compact, more disciplined, and more overpowering than any which had preceded it, or any which *has* followed it.—BAGEHOT.

*He* could not forget, because he could not know, anything about the despotisms which *have* in fact followed. He might know and forget something about all the despotisms that had preceded or *should* follow (in direct speech, 'that have preceded or shall follow') : 'this may result in the most compact despotism in all history, past and future'. But probably Bagehot does not even mean this: the last clause seems to contain a reflection of his own, falsely presented as a part of what *he* ought to have reflected.

Gordon was a very energetic agitator, and he probably had some *sense of self-importance* in his agitation.—MCCARTHY.

That is, 'he probably felt that he had too high an opinion of himself'; for *self-importance* means not 'one's own importance' but 'a too high opinion of one's own importance'. Read 'there was probably some self-importance . . .' or 'he had probably an exaggerated sense of his own importance'.

A . . . resolution, in which there was *much which every one liked*, and *much which every one disliked*, though, of course, the favourite parts of some were the objectionable parts to others.—BAGEHOT.

That is, much was unanimously approved, much else unanimously disapproved; and of the remainder 'the favourite'.

parts etc.'. It is clear that Bagshot means 'every one found much to like and much to dislike',—quite another thing.

### TRITE PHRASES AND CATCHWORDS

The worn-out phrases considered in a former chapter were of a humorous tendency: we may add here some expressions of another kind, all of them calculated in one way or another to save the writer trouble; the trouble of description, or of producing statistics, or of thinking what he means. Such phrases naturally die hard; even 'more easily imagined than described' still survives the rough handling it has met with, and flourishes in writers of a certain class. 'Depend upon it', 'you may take my word for it', 'in a vast majority of cases', 'no thinking man will believe', 'all candid judges must surely agree', 'it would be a slaying of the slain', 'I am old-fashioned enough to think', are all apt to damage the cause they advocate.

The shrill formula *It stands to reason* is one of the worst offenders. Originally harmless, and still no doubt often used in quite rational contexts, the phrase has somehow got a bad name for prefacing fallacies and for begging questions; it lacks the delicious candour of its feminine equivalent—'Kindly allow me to know best'—, but appeals perhaps not less irresistibly to the generosity of an opponent.

It stands to reason that the English novel at 6s. net is an absurdly high price, when we take into consideration the trash that is written and the consequent small sum that is paid by the publishers to the authors.—*D. T.*

It stands to reason that my men have their own work to attend to, and cannot be running about London all day rectifying other people's mistakes.

It stands to reason that Russia, though vast, is a poor country, that the war must cost immense sums, and that there must come a time . . .—*S.*

Similarly, when a writer assures us that 'the motor has *come to stay*—it is no use arguing about that; we recognize at once that he is right; it is no use arguing with an opponent who has that talisman at command.

*Arithmetical* and *geometrical progression* owe their extreme popularity to the widespread belief that *arithmetical* means 'fast' and *geometrical* 'very fast'. There are several ways of misusing them. What the *Spectator* says below would be equally true, and equally significant, if the number in 1906 had been 10,004. The use of the term arithmetical progression mystifies those who have not a smattering of algebra, and provokes the ridicule of those who have.

In 1903 there were ten thousand "paying guests", last year [1906] fifty thousand. The rate of increase is better, it will be observed, than arithmetical progression.—S.

*The exception proves the rule* means 'the lawgiver, by excepting some cases, shows that he meant the law to apply to all others'. *Exception* means 'act of excepting'; and if we now take it in the sense of 'case excepted', we have to remember that the exception must emanate from the same authority as the rule. The popular misuse of the words is ordinarily quite conscious, and more or less playful (Unpunctual? I was never late in my life.—You were late for breakfast this morning.—Was I? well, the exception proves the rule); but there is no mistaking the sincerity of the writer quoted below, nor his sublime faith in a proverbial Providence.

That the incidence of import duties will be affected by varying conditions, and that in some exceptional cases the exporter will bear a large share of it, has never been denied; but exceptions prove the rules and do not destroy them.—W. G.

We conclude with the indulgent-superior *of course*, suggesting often a recent visit to a work of reference.

Milton of course [i. e. as I saw the other day in a letter to the *Spectator*] had the idea of his line from Tacitus.

He is, of course, a son of the famous P. A. Sothorn, of "Lord Dundreary" fame.—W. G.

The House being in committee, . . . the Speaker would not, of course, under ordinary circumstances, have been present.—W. G.

• μέν and μὴν are of course only two forms of the same word.—W. LEAF.

It seems absurd to tell us; and yet, he half hopes we do not know.

## CHAPTER VI

### PUNCTUATION

WE shall assume that the reader knows the ordinary practice, and requires no more than a few warnings on special dangers.

The modern tendency, a good one in itself, is towards simplicity; its manifestations, however, are not always satisfactory—least of all, perhaps, one that we shall call

#### THE SPOT-PLAGUE

The principle of this is that every sentence not followed by a conjunction shall have a full stop; its exponents incline also to do without conjunctions, and usually consider a comma sufficient before a sentence that has a conjunction. For them the semicolon and colon virtually cease to exist. Lightness and sparkle are the qualities aimed at; a succession of crackers in the form of perpetual new sentences a line or so in length are let off in the hope that the reader will not be able to go to sleep; but his jaded nerves soon cease to respond, and the dreariest monotony results from unrelieved sprightliness. We give one specimen, of the cheapest journalistic kind:—

Posen is on the great plain that stretches from Holland to Asia. You may travel in the swiftest express over this plain for days and days. And it is as if you moved not. A sense comes upon you as of being confronted with a distance immeasurable—a distance not to be grasped by the mind. The horizon is at once fixed and unreachable. You pass great towns. But these are as specks on this boundless, gigantic plain. Here on this outer immenseness man and his works are as things not to be reckoned with.

A plain sinister and gigantic. Of silence and mystery and terror. For there were the times when slowly up from it arose hosts of desolation.

Over it came the strange fighting men from out of the far, profound East. Slaying hordes with eyes of imagination. For surely was it that these men were drawn onward by the mystery of the unreachable horizon. They passed slowly over it to the setting sun. For them this plain was as was the ocean to the fair-haired Norse sons of the sword.—*D. M.*

True wisdom lies between this and the old-fashioned elaboration of periods: we should assist the reader by grouping with the aid of semicolons, but not strain his powers of attention by period-making.

Another direction in which the modern desire of simplicity sometimes goes too far is that of

### UNDER-STOPPING

Commas are now rightly dispensed with in many positions where they were formerly used; but these were chiefly the commas that might be inserted or not, usually in pairs, like brackets, to give emphasis or a parenthetical effect to adverbs or their equivalents; they were constantly used out of mere habit, and we are all the better without them. But to omit the comma between two sentences joined by a conjunction, though the subject is expressed again, or even changed, in the second of them, is a different matter; the reader, instead of being relieved from a needless and troublesome check, is hurried over a real obstacle without warning. Even an adverbial clause of any length should be parted by commas, unless, being prepared for by an introductory word like *so*, it is inseparable. It will be plain enough where additional commas should have been inserted in:—

He scorned discretion and compromise and the plausible disguises of cowardice and indolence never deceived his robust and candid mind.—*Speaker.*

It looks impossible and only the toughest cement would prevent the falling of a nest so stuffed and weighted.—*O.*

The Germans have not far short of 20,000 men in South Africa and it would be mad folly to diminish our garrison.—*O.*

Events in Russia are at a curious pause though the Goremykin Cabinet seems to be on the point of quitting office.—*O.*



We do not understand how the recipient reconciles it with his own theory of proportional representation since that stern principle of equality applied to peerages would leave no member of democracy lower than a duke.—O.

This practice will no doubt be reduced to reasonable bounds when the enthusiasm for novelty has cooled; it is a reaction from the older fault, still far more common, of

### OVER-STOPPING

There was formerly a passion for enclosing between a pair of commas any expression that could possibly be regarded as parenthetical; an air of precision was thus imparted. Adverbial qualifications are never essential to the grammar of a sentence; and unless they are of a negative character (*not, at no time, under no circumstances, hardly, &c.*), they may be regarded as unessential also to its truth. It is thus legitimate, however annoying to the reader, to enclose in commas any adverbial expression that is not of a negative character. One form of over-stopping is to forget this last condition and separate from the sentence a phrase essential to its meaning:

The Prime Minister will, in no circumstances and on no consideration whatever, consent to . . .

This particular variety, though definitely wrong, is less irritating than many that are not. While an adverbial expression not of a negative kind may be lawfully separated, writers have begun to realize that this power used with discrimination is much more valuable than if exercised mechanically and invariably. Adverbial clauses, unless very light and short, are felt to require the commas; but an adverbial phrase or adverb should not have them except to secure an attention that it would not otherwise receive. In some of the following examples slight changes in arrangement are necessary, besides mere omission of stops, to get rid of the jerky discomfort; these we must leave the reader to work out.

The smallest portion possible of curious interest had been awakened within me, and, at last, I asked myself, within my own mind . . .—BORROW.

In questions of trade and finance, questions which, owing, perhaps, to their increasing intricacy, seem . . . —BRYCE.

It is, however, already plain enough that, unless, indeed, some great catastrophe should upset all their calculations, the authorities have very little intention . . . —T.

Jeannie, too, is, just occasionally, like a good girl out of a book by a sentimental lady-novelist.—T.

Thus, their work, however imperfect and faulty, judged by modern lights, it may have been, brought them face to face with . . . —HUXLEY.

Lilias suggested the advice which, of all others, seemed most suited to the occasion, that, yielding, namely, to the circumstances of their situation, they should watch . . . —SCOTT.

Both Tom and John knew this; and, therefore, John—the soft-hearted one—kept out of the way.—TROLLOPE.

• In speaking of negative adverbial qualifications, we used the words *essential* and *unessential*; it is important in some other punctuation questions to distinguish, and avoid separating by commas, what may be called

#### • • • ESSENTIAL BELONGINGS

The defining relative clause, the nature of which is explained on pp. 58–60, should never, whereas a non-defining relative clause should always, be cut off by commas. Of the sentences quoted below, the first two have incorrect commas before defining clauses, the third is wrongly without commas before a non-defining clause:—

The man, *who* thinketh in his heart and hath the power straightway (very straightway) to go and do it, is not so common in any country.—CROCKETT.

Those, *who* are urging with most ardour what are called the greatest benefits of mankind, are narrow, self-pleasing, conceited men.—EMERSON.

The Marshall Islands will pass from the control of the Jaluit Company under that of the German colonial authorities *who* will bear the cost of administration and will therefore collect all taxes.—T.

Another unity too essential to tolerate separation by commas is that between a verb and its subject, object, or complement.

I had little idea that his humiliation, would be brought about by one, whose sole strength consists in setting people to sleep.—BORROW.

But the crew of the *Bounty*, mutinied against him, and set him half naked in an open boat.—BORROW.

Depreciation of him, fetched up at a stroke the glittering armies of her enthusiasm.—MEREDITH.

Swift's view of human nature, is too black to admit of any hopes of their millennium.—L. STEPHEN.

The famous researches of Schwann and Schleiden in 1837 and the following years, founded the modern science of histology.—HUXLEY.

In the two sentences that now follow, from Mr. Morley, the offending comma of the first cuts off *centre*, which is what grammarians call the oblique complement, from its verb *made*; the offending comma of the second parts the direct object *groups* from its verb *drew*.

De Maistre was never more clear-sighted than when he made a vigorous and deliberate onslaught upon Bacon, the centre of his movement against revolutionary principles.

They drew into the light of new ideas, groups of institutions, usages, and arrangements which affected the well-being of France.

A particular case of subject and verb to which the same rule applies is the absolute construction. To comma the participle in this from its verb almost always puts the reader for the moment under the impression that the noun of the absolute construction is to be also the subject of the sentence; it is a laying of false scent.

The garrison, having been driven from the outer line of defences on July 30, Admiral Witoft considered it high time to make a sortie.—T.

But that didn't last long; for Dr. Blimber, happening to change the position of his tight plump legs, as if he were going to get up, Toots swiftly vanished.—DICKENS.

Finally, clauses or phrases bearing an essential relation to a *so*, *as*, *such*, &c., expressly inserted in the main sentence to pave the way for them, should never be cut off by commas.

Some readers, perhaps, may think it comparatively easy for a biographer, evidently so full of personal affection, as in the present case, to represent his hero as filling a much greater place than he really did.—*Speaker*.

It does not follow that our direct-fire guns should be so greatly out-ranged, as they are in most cases, except when used in narrow waters, where long range guns are necessary.—T.

# MISPLACEMENT OF STOPS AND QUOTATION MARKS

(1) The comma is often misplaced in substantival *that*-clauses when *that* is immediately followed by an adverbial expression; the comma that might rightly be used at the beginning of the latter, corresponding to another at the end, is placed before the *that*, where it is unjustifiable.

And the second is, that for the purpose of attaining culture, an exclusively scientific education is at least as effectual as . . . —HUXLEY.

It follows directly from this definition, that however restricted the range of possible knowledge may be, philosophy can never be excluded from it. —BALFOUR.

(2) Compositors have a foolish prejudice against placing the concluding quotation mark before the stop that often occurs at the end of a quotation, though more often than not the stop is not part of the quotation, but required only by the containing sentence. The following examples are given first in the correct and then in the incorrect but usual form:—

We hear that 'Whom the Gods love die young', and thenceforth we collect the cases that illustrate it.

But what is the use of saying 'Call no man happy till he dies'?

We hear that 'Whom the Gods love die young,' and thenceforth we . . .

But what is the use of saying, 'Call no man happy till he dies?'

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